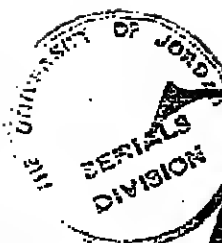


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Thursday February 26 1998

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Women: Blair's new deal

New role in policy making across Whitehall

Lucy Ward and Anne Perkins

THE Government is to launch Britain's first national strategy on violence against women as part of a new cross-department commitment to "feminise" policy-making. A strategy paper setting out plans to tackle issues from domestic violence to workplace sexual harassment is expected in April. It is the first key action taken by an increasingly powerful cabinet committee on women's issues, which has also pressed for cross-department action on improving child care.

The violence strategy, which mirrors national campaigns in Canada and Australia, comes as the Government adopts a formal undertaking to consider the impact on women of all policy-making. Experimental women-only juries from a cross-section of the population are also being set up to look at key policy areas affecting women. They will have powers to summon ministers to their deliberations.

The feminist move, known as mainstreaming, is understood to have led to the decision that families can opt to have the new working families' tax credit, to be announced in the Budget next month, paid directly to women.

One source close to the development of the policy said: "The idea is to make sure every department thinks about women as a first thought, not as an afterthought."

The Violence Against Women strategy is expected to involve a range of Whitehall departments, including the Home Office, the Lord



Tony Blair with women MPs last May. 'The idea is to make sure departments make women their first thought, not an afterthought'

Chancellor's Office, Health and the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions.

The cabinet sub-committee on women will be the "main focal point," sources say, but the strategy will be co-ordinated by the Women's Unit, set up by the Government after the election within the Department of Social Security.

The agreement on mainstreaming and a violence strategy is a success for Social Security Secretary Harriet Harman, chair of the cabinet sub-committee on women, who has been struggling to restore her political reputation after the setbacks she suffered over the lone-parent benefit controversy.

The first project expected to be launched as part of the strategy will be a national survey of women's refuges to establish whether provision for victims of domestic violence is adequate.

There are also plans to examine the way domestic violence is dealt with by the criminal justice system, including its treatment by the police, Crown Prosecution Service, prisons and courts. The strategy is designed to highlight both failings and good practice within the system.

Other targets are likely to be women's safety in public spaces, including issues such as safety on public transport and street lighting, and workplace harassment.

Domestic violence campaigners last night applauded plans for a national drive to combat the problem. The Zero Tolerance Trust, the Edinburgh-based campaign group which raises awareness of domestic violence and has contributed to a consultation on the strategy, said: "We have pressed for this for a long time. A national strategy identifies the problem and signals real government commitment to tackle it."

The 16-strong women's juries are being used in order to ensure that ministers gain a feel for grassroots opinion on issues such as child care and family-friendly working. The groups are expected to meet shortly, one in April and one in May dealing with child care and family-friendly employment respectively, for three days of discussion. They will have the power to call witnesses, including ministers, as they hammer out views, and will draw up reports for submission to government.

While Whitehall sources admit mainstreaming is not yet central to all departments, the Treasury has been holding regular meetings with the Women's Budget Group set up by the Fawcett Society, a campaigning women's group.

Last night the society's Sheila Diplock said: "It feels as if we have gone bursting through the Treasury's doors. They've really understood that they can't claim that it's a budget for women and children if they haven't considered what impact it will have on them."

Poor to get child care cash boost

Lucy Ward, Anne Perkins and Michael White

SENIOR ministers have agreed a budget deal that will mean the Government pays three-quarters of the costs of child care for low-income families, the Guardian can reveal.

Details are to be set out in a consultative green paper to be published in April. Social Security Secretary Harriet Harman will tell MPs tomorrow.

Last night's disclosure of the latest building block in the Government's ambitious welfare-to-work strategy came after yesterday's revelation in the Guardian that ministers plan to restore the equivalent value of last December's controversial cut in lone parent benefit, over which 47 Labour MPs rebelled.

The changes agreed between Chancellor Gordon Brown and Ms Harman would not restore the cuts which will reduce new claimant lone parents' benefits to the same level as those paid to couples from April. They would ensure that lone parents on benefit or in work will all get increases to more than compensate for the cuts.

Tony Blair, however, faced taunts of a "U-turn" in the Commons yesterday. Conservatives warned that his government's commitment to radical welfare reform is already buckling.

"Why are you now backsliding on your vow to reduce welfare spending and tackle welfare dependency?" Tory leader William Hague asked at Prime Minister's question time. "Faced with backbench rebels and a grassroots revolt ... your government has begun to lose its nerve."

Mr Blair insisted: "We are not backsliding ... There is not a U-turn." Labour rebels gave a cautious welcome to the latest refinements of the welfare-to-work strategy, in which all poor children from families in or out of work, living with one or both parents, stand to gain equally.

With the Budget still three weeks away, many said they first want to read the small print, how much money is available and, crucially, when. The payment of 75 per cent of child care costs is designed as a further incentive for people to get back to work. The Treasury will pay the



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Ken Jackson, page 6; Leader comment, page 9

Dome dreams shattered as ravers gatecrash party

Name of calm zone sparks trademark row

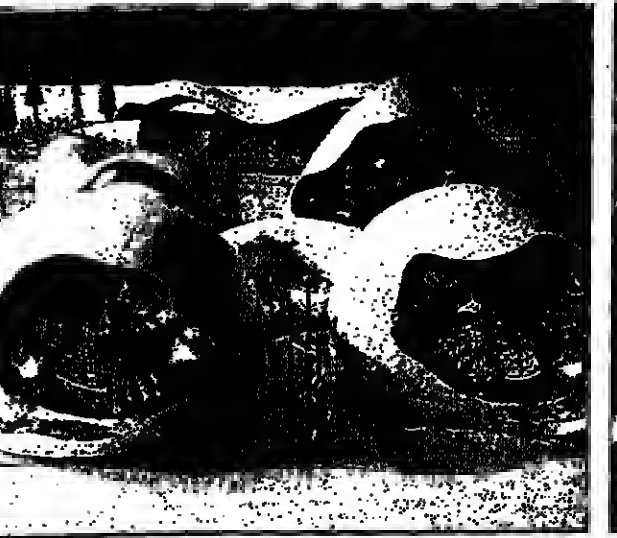
Dan Gialster Arts Correspondent

JUST a day after the prime minister's triumphant launch of the Millennium Dome, a small problem has emerged with the nation's chance to feel good about itself.

Dreamscape, the name given to the zone inside the dome devoted to calm and reflection, is a registered trademark and the company which owns it has given the organisers a week to withdraw the name.

Dreamscape is the trademark for raves promoted by the company ESP. Dreamscape has been active for 10 years, holding four licensed raves a year in Bourne mouth and Somerset.

ESP's Steven Foster said: "It's an outrage. The first



The Dreamscape exhibit, left, is unlikely to try to pass itself off as a rave but could infringe the dance promoters' copyright



The trademarks registered by Dreamscape in 1994 cover "the organisation of live events" and the use of the name for "clothing for men and women". It is unlikely that the

issued at yesterday's launch were working titles. "We're not intending the names we announced to be trademarks," he said. "They are working titles. There's no intention of passing off, but we will obviously be examining any claims that are presented to us."

The dome's organisers will now be worrying in case they failed to check copyright and trademark for other titles used in Tuesday's launch. Licensed To Skill, the work zone, could perhaps be accused of passing itself off as a Bond movie; Serious Play, the play zone, is surely the name of a sitcom; The Body Zone may well interest the Body Shop's lawyers.

One zone that should be free from legal challenge is the Time To Talk zone. It may sound suspiciously like a British Telecom advertisement, but that's not a problem: the zone is sponsored by BT.

Hugo Young, page 8; Letters, page 9

Britain	World News	Analysis	Sport
Armed forces mourning John Archer killed in tractor accident, becoming the latest casualty of the road	Deadly attack in London caused by the IRA, effect of IRA on the British economy	Manager of Commercial Union Assurance Co. General Accident will be a 'big' company	England's new captain Mark Goldberg signed at a club takeover and Steve Coppell stood aside as manager
5	7	11	16

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Sketch

Everyday story of rambling folk



Simon Hoggart

TRY to avoid the countryside. Far too noisy. It's isn't the feed mills grinding up diseased sheep, it's the endless bell-ringing practice and the roar of earth movers digging up another ancient hedgerow before the new regulations come into force.

Over in Five-Acre Field, dotted with hayricks wrapped in the traditional black plastic. Farmer Giles is getting a spot of cash letting the land out for motocross rallies and rock concerts. No wonder a quarter of a million country folk are descending on London this weekend: they want a spot of peace and quiet.

Still, the Right to Roam is one of our great national privileges. So is the right to wander through the Parliamentary Order Paper, following this byway here, that bridle path there, meandering along a old canal bank.

Which is exactly what Mr. Tim Yeo was doing yesterday, when he was suddenly startled by an angry hull, leapt into a pool of liquid manure, and scrambled out on to a roll of barbed wire where he remained firmly lodged, to the delight of jeering and uncaring colleagues.

You have to feel sorry for Mr Yeo. Years ago, the Tory MP for Suffolk South exercised his personal right to roam and fathered an illegitimate baby. Having resigned from office then, he has been restored to the front bench by William Hague.

Yesterday he demanded an apology from Michael Meacher, the environment minister. Mr Yeo was beside himself with fury. His face was scarlet with rage. He

made the average stag in the rutting season look like Dale Winton on Prozac.

He began slowly. What Mr Meacher had done was proof that power had gone to the heads of all ministers. They refused to answer questions, they refused to meet MPs. Then he put his head down and charged for the barbed wire. "Our parliamentary traditions have been centuries in the making. Men and women have given their lives for them. Now they have now been consigned to the gutter by this Government!"

And what had Mr Meacher done? Had he abused the House like Oliver Cromwell? ("In the name of God, go!") Had he sent troops to arrest MPs, like Charles I, or bombed the place, like the IRA? Had he let rip a juicy one during prayers?

None of these things. He had allowed a copy of his consultative document on walkers' rights to fall into the hands of the Ramblers' Association the day before it was available to MPs.

As parliamentary solecisms go, this falls somewhere between forgetting to call someone "honourable" and not buying your round. It doesn't matter much. Nevertheless Mr Meacher apologised, fully and openly.

But nothing calmed Mr Yeo down. "It is not just an insult to the House, but to everyone who elected us," he raved. Then came a sound which must have inserted icicles into his heart. It was fellow Tories taking Mr Meacher's part. "We have noted with approval the handsome apology he has made," said Nicholas Soames. "The House must accept his total and unreserved apology," said Nick Winterton. "We welcome it," said Nicholas Lyell.

Down below, the enraged Mr Yeo looked at first bewildered, then confused and finally deeply puzzled. As his friends tramped off into the dusk, heading home for hot tea and crumpets, there he was, still hanging on the old barbed wire.

Review

Teasing out terror Tarantino-style

Michael Billington
You'll Have Had Your Hole
West Yorkshire Playhouse

WELSH's first original stage play is a disappointingly crude crime and punishment saga: one in which the moral argument does not so much arise logically from the action as get slapped on to it like a sticky label.

Welsh's sledgehammer technique is evident from the outset. The setting is a disused recording studio and we are hit from the start by a wall of sound and the sight of a man, Dex, trussed up and suspended from a mobile pulley. He is clearly guilty of some unspecified crime to be avenged by his tormenting captors.

On the one hand, there is the manic, cat-like and palpably high jinks who announces many times that he is going to sodomise his victim: on the other, there is the more lecherous Docksey who is simultaneously going to assault Dex's girlfriend, Laney, hidden away in a nearby flat.

For half of the play's 90-minute length, Welsh teases and plays with the audience: Jinks terrorises Dex with scissors,

pliers, Engelbert Humperdinck and threats of anal rape while Docksey keeps nipping out to start a slow seduction of the adjacent Laney. Eventually we get the point of the grisly experiment: Dex and Docksey have been sent on a job by a Scottish gangland boss to punish a defaulting debtor, and Docksey has been tainted by the former's murderous, psychopathic rage. So now it is Dex's turn to get his punishment.

Welsh seems less interested in causes than effects, plays voyeuristically with violence in the manner of Tarantino and reveals, under the brutality and harshness, a deadly chauvinist sentimentality: one balks at the contemptuous ease with which Laney and Docksey, two of life's losers, suddenly discover true love in the midst of the latter's vengeful erotic games.

In suggesting redemption is a possibility, Welsh shamelessly manipulates character and shows the play to have a soft, mushy centre. If our attention is held, it is not by any presumed moral dilemma, but by the hectic virtuosity of Ian Brown's production, the ingenuity of Robin Don's split-stage set and by the energy of Tam Dean Burn's performance as Jinks.

HarperCollins editor resigns after alleged row over criticism of Chinese government in Patten book

Top Murdoch publisher quits

Kamal Ahmed
and Owen Bowcott

THE EDITOR-in-chief of publisher HarperCollins has resigned following a dispute over a book being written by former Hong Kong governor Chris Patten which is thought to be critical of the Chinese government.

Stuart Proffitt, widely respected as one of the best literary editors in Britain, quit amid allegations that Rupert Murdoch, the owner of HarperCollins, tried to tone down the book.

Mr Murdoch has extensive media interests in China including his Far East satellite television station, Star TV. In 1994 Mr Murdoch's company decided to remove the

BBC from the Star service after his coverage of the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre brought criticism from the Communist government.

Mr Murdoch wants to expand his media interests in the country which has one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

An internal memorandum sent to HarperCollins staff in London yesterday afternoon confirmed that Mr Proffitt, who was editing Mr Patten's book, had stopped working for the company with immediate effect.

He had not been seen in the office for two weeks and staff were expecting an announcement.

"The memo did not give any explanation about why he had gone," one HarperCollins



Stuart Proffitt... won't be struggling for work

employee said. It was signed by the company's managing director of the trade division, Adrian Bourne.

HarperCollins has refused

to comment on the dispute over Mr Patten's work which has already been sold to publishers in China.

Mr Patten's book, called East and West, is a prestige project for HarperCollins which is thought to have paid an advance of £150,000. It now looks as if the deal is close to collapse.

"It's a superb book and Stuart Proffitt is a superb editor," said Michael Sissons, Mr Patten's agent.

At the weekend he said that the book was likely to be a big international hit and would "ruffle a few feathers".

Mr Proffitt is one of the leading book editors in London. He clinched the deal to publish Baroness Thatcher's two-volume autobiography and he also edited the novels of Jeffrey Archer.

"He won't be struggling to find offers for new work," a close friend said last night.

"What I find hard to imagine is that anyone could think that they could pull the wool over either Chris Patten's eyes or Stuart's. He is one of the finest editors around."

Conservative friends of Mr Patten rallied around the former Governor of Hong Kong who frequently clashed with the Chinese authorities over the handover of the former British colony.

The Chinese government described him variously as a "perfidious whore" and a "drizzling idiot" after he tried to bolster democratic institutions in Hong Kong.

"First they tried to censor it [the book], then they said it was boring," one well-placed senior Tory confirmed.

Neither Mr Patten, who is believed to be at his London home finishing off the book, or Mr Proffitt could be contacted last night. Mr Proffitt is thought to be at his country home in Herefordshire.

Mr Patten is half way through his book which will detail his protracted negotiations with the Chinese government as well as giving his views on the best way to run advanced capitalist economies.

A BBC television deal has already been signed.

The loss of Mr Patten would be a blow to HarperCollins, which has a reputation for publishing weighty political books. John Major, the former prime minister, has sold his memoirs to the company.

Inside Story, G2, page 7



Playing the game... Researchers found that three-quarters of children had gambled on fruit machines

PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE GOLDWATER

Camelot challenged on child gamblers

Lottery watchdog orders action to halt ticket sales to under-16s

Kamal Ahmed
Media Correspondent

THE TROUBLED operator of the National Lottery will face fresh criticism today when the director general of Oflot calls for tough action on the problem of children playing illegally.

John Stoker, the acting director of Oflot following the resignation of Peter Davis, said that Camelot had failed

to tackle the problem of under-age players despite knowing of concerns for many years.

He will demand that Camelot take firm action against retailers who sell to people under the age of 16 and put forward a new action plan on how to reduce the number of children playing the lottery.

His strong attack comes in response to a report which reveals that a significant number of children are playing the lottery, and that it is

creating a "gambling habit" among the young.

The study by the University of Plymouth and commissioned by Oflot, which regulates the lottery, found that nearly half of all children have gambled on lottery scratchcards and 40 per cent have gambled on the main Wednesday and Saturday draws.

About 700 of the 10,000 12-15 year olds questioned for the report said that they had been sold scratchcards or lottery tickets illegally. Nearly 550 children from the 114 schools surveyed said that they had a serious problem with gambling, either on fruit machines or the lottery.

Some spent more than £10 a day on gambling and many admitted to stealing from their parents or shops to feed their habit.

"I am concerned that under-age sales of National Lottery products do not appear to have reduced since our last survey in 1996," Mr Stoker said. Camelot had made some efforts to tackle the problem, but much more was needed.

The report will now be sent to the Home Office and Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, who has government responsibility for the lottery.

A government spokeswoman said that they would

be studying the findings closely and were pleased that Oflot had reacted so swiftly and robustly.

The research was undertaken by Dr Sue Fisher at the Centre for Research into the Social Impact of Gambling in Plymouth and a highly respected expert on gambling and the impact of the lottery.

She said that young problem gamblers became involved in stealing and truanting. "It seems that the National Lottery has tapped into the existing mature market for fruit machine gambling among young people," said Dr Fisher, who is also a Home Office adviser on gambling.

The report says many parents did not seem to mind their children playing the lottery.

Camelot has been struggling to repair its image after one of its directors was found guilty of trying to bribe Richard Branson, the head of the Virgin group of companies, to pull out of the race to run the lottery.

A spokeswoman said the company had already put in place systems to catch retailers who sell to children but admitted that only 26 retailers out of 33,000 have had their licences to sell tickets revoked because of under-age selling.

Help for low income families in Budget as Blair is accused of U-turn on benefit cuts

continued from page 1
childcare costs through the new Working Family Tax Credit, ensuring that it goes directly to the poorest working families.

Instead of being paid through the pay packet, often the father's, it will be up to families to choose which parent gets the extra cash.

Asked for more details by a committee of MPs yesterday, Ms Harman would only say: "That's something, hopefully,

we will have to wait for in the Budget. But the Chancellor has said he wants to give more help through the tax system with the cost of childcare for low-income working families. The present system "doesn't work, doesn't reach enough people," she said.

Her new childcare tax credit scheme, due to start in April, will be backed up with the £300 million which the Government has already committed to the Childcare Strat-

egy. Together with the parental contribution of 25 per cent, the tax credit is supposed to allow each family to fund a pre-school place for an under-five and an out-of-school place for an older child. Parents will be free to top up the credit by more than 25 per cent. Children under 15 will qualify for the money.

Local authorities will coordinate the drive for affordable high-quality care. "Childcare should not be a lottery; it

should not depend on where you live," said a DSS official.

Conservatives claimed that a Treasury flush with booming tax revenues is already buying its way out of trouble.

"Those 47 rebels will cost Brown millions," said one.

Mr Hague told MPs: "We all know a U-turn when we see one. Isn't it the case that faced with backbench rebels and a grassroots revolt, at Labour Party roadshows, where they have been throwing eggs at

the Chancellor of the Exchequer, your Government has begun to lose its nerve?"

Mr Blair countered by accusing the Thatcher and Major governments of spending 18 years increasing both poverty and the welfare bill.

But the Prime Minister knows his government weakened the political consensus for welfare reform with December's clumsy cut.

It was designed to uphold changes inherited from the

Tories while finding the extra £300m for child care. But it backfired, largely at Harriet Harman's expense.

Yesterday officials in Downing St and other key Whitehall departments ritually denied any U-turn arising from yesterday's Guardian leak and said they could not discuss "budget matters."

They stressed that Mr Brown's budget will help the poor, not least by seeking to tackle disincentives to work.

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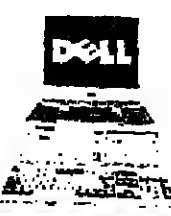
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Original version

Mrs Railton-Bell: Read this out to me.

Lady Matheson: Where, dear? "Lorry driver loses licence?"

Mrs Railton-Bell: No, no. "Ex-officer bound over."

Lady Matheson: Oh yes. "Ex-officer bound over. I am arrested on Esplanade... On Thursday last, before the Bournemouth magistrates, David Angus Pollock, 55, giving his address as the Beauregard Hotel, Morgan Crescent... Major Pollock? Oh!

Mrs Railton-Bell: Go on.

Lady Matheson: "Morgan Crescent — pleaded guilty to a charge of persistently importuning... male persons" Oh no. Oh no. He must have been drinking.

Mrs Railton-Bell: He's a teetotaler...

Lady Matheson: "A Mr William Osborn, 38, of 4 Studland Row, giving evidence, said that at about 11.15 pm on July 18 Pollock had approached him on the Esplanade, and had asked him for a light. A few words were exchanged, following which Pollock made a certain suggestion... Inspector Franklin, giving evidence, said that a watch was kept on Pollock for roughly an hour. During this time he was seen to approach no less than four persons, on each occasion with an unlit cigarette in his mouth... At 1 am Pollock was arrested and stated: 'You have made a terrible mistake... I am a colonel in the Scots Guards.' A petrol lighter, in perfect working order, was found in his pocket."



Terence Rattigan in 1970... he contented himself with the thought that his audiences understood that the play was really about the gay experience. They didn't

Usual version

Mrs Railton-Bell: Read this out to me.

Lady Matheson: Where, dear? "Lorry driver loses licence?"

Mrs Railton-Bell: No, no. "Ex-officer bound over. Offence in cinema... On Thursday last, before the Bournemouth magistrates, David Angus Pollock, 55, giving his address as the Beauregard Hotel, Morgan Crescent... Major Pollock? Oh!

Mrs Railton-Bell: Go on.

Lady Matheson: "... Morgan Crescent — pleaded guilty to a charge of insulting behaviour in a Bournemouth cinema... Oh! Oh!... on the complaint of a Mrs Osborn, 43 — of 4 Studland Road." He must have been drinking.

Mrs Railton-Bell: He's a teetotaler...

Lady Matheson: "Mrs Osborn, giving evidence, stated that Pollock, sitting next to her, persistently nudged her in the arm, and later attempted to take other liberties... Inspector Franklin, giving evidence, said that Pollock had been kept under observation by police officers... he had been observed to change his seat no less than five times, always choosing a seat next to a female person. On leaving the cinema Pollock was arrested. 'You have made a terrible mistake. You have the wrong man. I was only in the place half an hour. I am a colonel in the Scots Guards.'"

Rattigan and the curious case of the gay major

Dan Glaister on the secret script that shows Terence Rattigan had intended the protagonist of *Separate Tables* to be arrested for importuning men on the esplanade

IT WAS hailed as one of the great expositions of British middle-class mores, Terence Rattigan's 1954 play *Separate Tables* tells how a retired major, resident in a small seaside hotel, is found guilty of molesting women in cinemas. His fellow residents are shocked, but in the end tolerance prevails: the major is allowed to stay on at the hotel.

But the play as it has been performed since its premiere is not what Rattigan intended. Now a new production at the King's Head theatre in London has restored the author's original script. Far from shocking the morals of the community for molesting women, the major is arrested for importuning men on the esplanade

at Bournemouth. The outcome is the same: tolerance prevails and the major is allowed to stay on. Colin Elwood, director of the production due to open at the end of next month, said: "Absolutely everything that's said about every other character and the responses only make sense if the major is gay. I'm delighted that we've found this. It's like a premiere of a play that was written 45 years ago. At last it sees the light of day. It's become this distorted, stunted thing that is a West End vehicle for television stars. This helps in the rehabilitation of a playwright who wasn't just a boulevardier. This is a play that is more dangerous and more controversial than *Look Back in Anger*."

Rattigan's intention was revealed in a biography published in 1985. The world premiere of the play in its original version will give further ammunition to those who have campaigned for Rattigan's work to be reassessed. Rattigan's brand of finely-crafted drama was superseded by the arrival of the Angry Young Men, led by John Osborne. Rattigan died in November 1977 in Bermuda, shunned by the British theatrical establishment and embittered by criticism of his work.

The difference between the two versions is a simple one: a page of dialogue in Rattigan's original draft was changed to alter the nature of the offence. The rest of the play remained the same.

Rattigan was motivated by a number of factors to change the play. One was the reaction such a storyline might provoke in his mother, Rattigan was concerned that his first nights, would be shocked and would realise that he was a homosexual. But he was also concerned about the wider political implications of such a theme. Writing after the play's premiere, he said: "It is literally true that when I began the play... I had already reached the point where the major's offence was to be revealed before I realised that if I were to get the play done in the West End at all I would have to find a way around the Lord Chancellor's present objection to any mention of this particular subject."

At the time, male homosexuality, even among consenting adults, was illegal. Any representation of it was prohibited by the Lord Chancellor, the government officer charged with protecting public morals. In the event, the Lord Chancellor was so impressed by the version subsequently produced that he praised it as "a little masterpiece". Rattigan tried to have the original version of the play performed on Broadway, after the British premiere, but the American producers were not keen. American audiences, they told Rattigan, had just seen *View From The Bridge*, and were now bored with gay scenes. In any case, Rattigan's mother was to accompany him to New York to the premiere. The British version of the play was produced. Rattigan never pressed for the original version to be performed, and its existence only came to light after his papers were sold to the British Library. Geoffrey Wansell, whose biography of Terence Rattigan was shortlisted for the 1995 Whitbread Prize, came across a letter from the New York producers suggesting the existence of another version of the play.

Rattigan contented himself with the thought that his audiences understood that the play was really about the gay experience. "I had in fact appealed over the head of the Lord Chamberlain to the sensibilities and particular awareness of an English audience," Rattigan wrote to the American producer. "I was in fact saying to them, 'Look, Ladies and Gentlemen, the Lord Chamberlain has forced me into an evasion, but you and I will foil him.'"



Eric Portman making up as Major Pollock at the St James' Theatre in 1954

PHOTOGRAPH: SNOODON

Pope rounds on New Age threat

John Hooper in Rome and Madeleine Bunting

POPE John Paul II is preparing an onslaught on New Age beliefs in time for the millennium. He is expected to set out his thinking in an encyclical — a letter sent to all Roman Catholic bishops — the most authoritative way in which he can make known his ideas. A systematic critique is to be made ready for publication later this year, say reports in Rome. Experts have produced working papers on individual topics, the conclusions of

which will be considered for inclusion in the Pope's work. His attack on the values of the Age of Aquarius is expected to be set in the context of an offensive against modern philosophical trends. His main objection is understood to be the concept of "systematic doubt", on the grounds that it precludes a belief in God rooted in certainty. The pope sees systematic doubt as the key to a system of beliefs which puts man, not God, at the centre of the universe. He is thought to regard the New Age movement, with its emphasis on self-realisation, as a product of such thinking.

"The Pope would oppose anything which suggests that salvation can come from our own works rather than through Jesus Christ," said Father David Evans, secretary to the Catholic Bishops' Conference on Faith and Culture in England. If, as reports from Rome suggest, a rare encyclical is issued, it will be a measure of the alarm New Age thinking provokes at the highest levels in the church. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the most influential theologian in the Vatican, has dismissed Buddhism, a major influence on the New Age

movement as "spiritual auto-criticism". He claims that it is now Buddhism, rather than Marxism, that poses the true challenge to the church. Fr Evans argues that the Church cannot afford only to condemn. "The Church also needs to listen to what the New Age has to say. Its rich understanding of humanity stresses the importance of the emotional life and desires which young people find helpful." The New Age movement is an amorphous collection of spiritual ideas ranging from wicca, shamanism and neopaganism to the human potential movement and astrology.

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Late in the evening of May 9, 1996, 33 people left the South Col of Everest hoping to reach the summit. Most of them were still far from camp when bad weather swept across the mountain. Everest, the movie

G2 cover story

4 BRITAIN

Films bring tourist boom for stately homes

Mrs Brown, filmed at Osborne House, and the right: Hamlet, filmed at Dover Castle



Out now

□ Mrs Brown, starring Judi Dench and Billy Connolly; filmed at Osborne House

Coming shortly

□ Basil, Gothic shocker starring Christian Slater and Derek Jacobi; Marble Hill House, Twickenham
□ Elizabeth I, romantic biopic starring Cate Blanchett and Geoffrey Rush; Warkworth and Aydon castles, Northumberland
□ Eugene Onegin, starring Ralph Fiennes; Northampton Grange, Hampshire

Back catalogue

□ 101 Dalmatians, starring Glenn Close; Kenwood House, north London
□ Hamlet, starring Mel Gibson and Glenn Close; Dover Castle
□ Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves, starring Kevin Costner; Old Wardour Castle, Wiltshire



Maew Kennedy
Heritage Correspondent

ENGLISH Heritage is enjoying a tourist boom at its historic properties, and yesterday the chairman, Sir Jocelyn Stevens, gave the credit to the revival of the British film industry.

stately homes used as locations in cinema and television films have seen visitor numbers soar. The most spectacular success is Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight, where numbers had been falling over several years. Visitor numbers jumped by 25 per cent, making it the most popular historic property.

Oscar-nominated Mrs Brown. The conservation quango, which manages more than 400 historic properties, earned almost £100,000 directly in location fees last year — charges range from £200 to £200 a day for exterior shots, and up to £3,000 a day for interiors — but far more in increased visit-

a record 218 million. Dame Judi Dench has been nominated for an Oscar for her role as Queen Victoria. Much of the film was shot at Osborne, the house Queen Victoria and Prince Albert built as a private home. Visitor numbers shot up immediately the film was released last year. By the

had 250,000 visitors, 50,000 of them in the 10 weeks after the film was released. Revenue at Osborne, from admissions and sales, was £1.1 million, a 20 per cent increase on 1996. The effect continues. Boosted by the Oscar nomination, the house has just reopened for the season, and visitor figures are 300

So many visitors want to know which properties are really famous that a special camera symbol is being added to the guide for this year, to indicate properties used as film and TV locations. This will help plot a pilgrimage around the Kenwood House lawn in Hampstead, north London.

frolicked: Rycote Chapel, Oxfordshire, where Jane Eyre's bigamous marriage was abandoned in the LWT version of the novel; and Tilbury Fort in Essex, where Sean Bean swash-buckled in Sharpe's Regiment. Visitor numbers at English Heritage's 409 historic properties were up by 11 per cent last year, to

more than 11 million. Although they have not yet found a way of charging visitors to downtown Sheffield, the city is overrun by Full Monty fans. Sir Jocelyn hopes they will admire more than the 600 listed buildings and note that English Heritage has put millions into regenerating the city's industrial centre since 1987.

Government response to Dearing inquiry £150 credits for training courses

Call for City to help fund university expansion

John Carvel
Education Editor

LORD Dearing warned Tony Blair yesterday that he would fail in his plans to improve and enlarge the universities unless the Treasury tapped new sources of finance in the City to solve a crisis of underfunding.

"Ministers held the position last summer by finding £185 million for higher education, but unless there is a further larger sum of money this summer, the universities will be expressing themselves fiercely," he said as the Government published its response to his inquiry. Lord Dearing avoided criticising the Government in July when it rejected his proposed reform of student funding. He wanted to charge a flat rate £1,000 tuition fee, but retain the £1,755 maintenance grant to avoid discouraging poorer students. Ministers decided to scrap the grant, but means test the fee. Yesterday he broke his silence when David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, said he could not respond to the Dearing report's demand for extra funding until after Whitehall's comprehensive spending review was completed.



Lord Dearing... warning of research underfunding

this year. "We said the money [raised by fees] should go to higher education. They said it should go to further and higher education. But if that's so, let's see it on the table," he said. The Dearing report proposed a compact between students and the Government. They would repay more of the cost of a university education after they graduated, and the Government would improve quality and expand student numbers to create a world class higher education system. Ministers were already legislating to introduce the fees. "I would have been happier if they had made an unambigu-

ous statement of money at this stage," he said.

The necessary resources could not be found quickly enough unless the Government committed itself to "selling" student debt on a regular basis to the financial institutions.

Students would borrow from the Government, repaying the money over 20 years or more after graduation. "The extra money can only come if the Government sells its loan book to the City," Lord Dearing said.

His committee recommended an increase in funding for higher education of £250 million in 1998/99, £595 million in 1999/2000 and £1,295 million by 2015/16. It also warned of a backlog of underfunding on laboratories and scientific equipment worth hundreds of millions of pounds.

"After the US, we still rank top in research... But we have not been replacing equipment or modernising research infrastructure... Companies are telling me, 'unless you modernise, we will place research contracts abroad'."

Lord Dearing welcomed a commitment by Mr Blunkett to improve the quality of university teaching. An institute for learning and teaching in higher education will co-ordinate better training of lecturers.

A spokesman for Mr Blunkett would not comment on Lord Dearing's plan to sell student debt. It was not realistic for any department to announce long-term spending plans before the comprehensive review. The introduction of tuition fees would produce substantial savings and these would be ploughed back into further and higher education.

The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals said universities were ready to deliver the Government's targets for expansion and improved access if they got appropriate funding.



Blunkett's announces learning revolution for adults

John Carvel
Education Editor

THE Government will try to kickstart a learning revolution by providing each of a million adults with a £150 credit to buy training courses and what their appetite for getting back into education, David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, said yesterday. People would qualify for an "individual learning account" if they were willing to top up the £150 with at least £25 from their own pockets. That would be enough to buy a year of weekly evening classes to get an A level in accountancy or a five-week intensive legal secretarial course.

The Government would fund the initial scheme by diverting £150 million lying idle in the reserves of training and enterprise councils. If the accounts worked, they would develop into an ambitious savings and borrowing mechanism, letting people invest in education when and where it suited them.

Participants would get a smart card to record their progress and the amount held in their account. Their personal contributions could get tax breaks and be topped up with subsidies from employers. He would issue a prospectus later this year with details of

who might be eligible. They are likely to include parents wanting to return to work after caring for children and people seeking their first A level.

The learning accounts were the centrepiece of the Government's much-delayed consultation paper on lifelong learning. It was demoted from white paper status earlier this month. Ministers said the change was insignificant, reflecting the lack of any firm legislative proposals. But there was speculation that the Treasury withheld funding for a policy that Downing Street found flimsy.

Mr Blunkett said people leaving school might have to change careers up to 10 times in a working life. "We now stand as a nation on the brink of a new learning age. Jobs are changing and with them the skills needed for the world of tomorrow... Learning is the key to economic prosperity."

Although most local college courses were subsidised by the Government, costs could be a deterrent. A £175 learning account could fund a package of courses, including an introduction to word processing, a three day initiation to the Internet and an eight week course on accounting, for people wanting to start a small business.

Employers should not be forced to contribute to individual learning accounts since



David Blunkett: letting people investing in education

they already paid £10.5 billion towards training their employees. "Their task is to train people for their jobs. Our job is to encourage them to do that... and to use the resources of the state to help

encourage individuals back into learning."

Other proposals in the paper included a new University for Industry using information technology to make courses available to people

studying at home or work and in local libraries. "Old style manufacturing industry has been broken down into small and medium sized enterprises, so if you are going to teach people... you have to provide it where they want it and when they want it."

The Government has set up a Learning Direct freephone helpline on 0800 100 900. The programme to help adults get basic literacy and numeracy skills is being doubled, with an extra £5 million of government funding this year.

John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB, said the lifelong learning policy had lost momentum.

"It is an open secret that the Government will not allocate extra money to this policy. Mr Blunkett has done his best but he has been turned over by the Treasury. Unfortunately there is a gigantic hole in the Government's policy... the Government is continuing with the failed policy of relying on the goodwill of companies. All the evidence suggests that old-fashioned appeals to employers to introduce decent training policies just do not work."

But Bill Morris, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said the announcement would help raise training standards.

The Learning Age: a renaissance for a new Britain, DfEE, £9.40.

Blair's celebrity love-ins are vulgar, says Blur singer

DAMON Albarn, lead singer of the pop group Blur, yesterday described Labour's attempts to court musicians and artists as vulgar and disgusting.

Albarn (above) — who was speaking at the House of Commons as part of a protest against government plans to abolish student grants and tuition fees — also claimed that by doing this, Labour was taking away a fundamental right of being young.

The Britpop singer said: "It is the Prime Minister's invitations to celebrity parties at Downing Street and those who attended them: 'I think that the sort of display when Labour won the election and everyone turning up at Number 10 was pretty disgusting. It was vulgar. I am not surprised that most people want to stay well clear of Labour and any of its ideas.'"

"They make such an issue of being a young government and yet they are taking a fundamental right of being young and being allowed to be young away." Mr Albarn said that he had got involved in the protest because he felt so strongly about the issue. "I get sick to death with the way Labour treated musicians and artists coming up to the election and I really, really wouldn't have got involved with anything to do with politics."

'Strongest woman' dies at 23

Luke Harding

FORENSIC tests were being carried out last night to solve the mystery of why Britain's strongest woman was found dead in bed at the age of 23.

The body of Jo Amies-Winter was discovered by her husband early on Monday at a house in Newbury, Berkshire, where the couple were staying with friends.

Police yesterday said a post mortem carried out on Tuesday was inconclusive. Her death was not being treated as suspicious.

Mrs Amies-Winter, who was a triathlete before taking up body building, was staying with another body builder, Graham Black, when she died.

Yesterday Mark Parsons, a friend of the dead woman and a fellow competitor, said: "I was at her independent test for steroids last year, and she tested negative."

"She seemed fine. I spoke to her husband after the news and he said she just went to bed and did not wake up."

Mrs Amies-Winter had suffered from a congenital heart defect, he added. Mrs Amies-Winter, from Hereford, was a member of the British junior squad in both European and world championships, before giving up athletics. A keen rugby player, she took part in "strongest woman" competitions across the country and

was recently judged the world's second strongest woman. At a competition last year she threw a 25 kilo tyre further than any of the men. A friend said yesterday she was preparing for an exhibition or demonstration when she died. "Bodybuilders tend to starve themselves and drink nothing in advance."

She said Mrs Amies-Winter's physique changed when she took up bodybuilding.

"When she was competing in the triathlon she was quite a petite-looking girl. She went away to college and when she came back she had got very big. Judging by her size there would have to be some enhancement drugs."

A spokesman for the West Berkshire coroner's office said inquiries were still continuing and no decision had been made about an inquest.



Jo Amies-Winter... found dead in bed by husband

Virtual soccer action for all with live matches on the Internet

Tim Radford
Science Editor

COMPUTER scientists have found a new way for fans to keep an eye on the ball. They hope to use microwave and video technologies to put virtual football matches live on the Internet.

There will be a downside. The players will "wear" team colours but they will not look much like players. Viewers will be able to follow the position on the field but might miss those telltale gestures like the odd two fingers in the linesman's direction. But Orad Hi Tec Systems of Israel hope to have the European Football Championships on computer screens by 2000.

The new system is called Scientist today. It relies on a transponder about the size of a credit card sewn into the shirt of each player, the referee and one inside the ball. The transponder will pick up a transmitter near the pitch, and transmit the signal to two

receivers, from which a computer will be able to calculate the player's position. Each player (and the ball) will have a unique tag, so the computer will be able to plot every position on the field simultaneously. It will then make a three-dimensional model of the state of play for the fan at the keyboard.

So far Sportrack has only just passed its first "feasibility" test.

Although it will allow computer buffs to stage action replays from different angles, it is not clear if fans will actually want to watch players with even less personality than Peter Beardsley.

There will certainly be a problem about broadcasting rights and there could be worries about blasting expensive signings with 90 minutes of microwave at every match — although the Israeli engineers claim that the output is tiny compared with cellphones.

And soccer's big chiefs might also need convincing, especially about a ball with a transponder inside.

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Fans furious as Archers bumps off star

Kamal Ahmed on latest serial killer

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Special to house

Alan Turing Home Affairs Editor

A

Titanic to

Fans furious as Archers bumps off star

Kamal Ahmed on latest serial killing

THERE has been a bereavement. Counselors are bracing themselves for a flood of calls. John Archer, young hero, entrepreneur, sometime bouncer, is dead. The Archers will never be the same.

Being an Archers fan has always been testing. Grace Archer died in Phil Archer's arms on the day ITV started broadcasting in 1955. Boh Larkin was accidentally shot dead by Tom Forrest in 1957.

And now young John, aged just 22 in Archer years, 23 in the real world, has breathed his last, killed under a tractor which overturned as he was trying to fix his father's fence.

Listeners have already reacted with fury. Archers Addicts, the programme's fan club, said that it had received a plethora of faxes and telephone calls about John's untimely demise.

"I have been surprised by the strength of feeling," said Heddi Nicklaus, head of the addicts. She is an Archers' cast veteran of 22 years standing, at present playing Kathy Perks, wife of Syd, landlord of the Bull.

"One man faxed us saying, 'You bastards, what are you doing? You'll be getting Shula pregnant next'."

"I haven't seen anything like it since Mark Hebdson was killed in a car accident in 1994."

There will be inquests and retributions. Did John's father, Tony, push him too far, ordering him to clean up his life?

Was Hayley Jordan's refusal to marry him part of the equation?

But to find out, the loyal band of listeners will have to stay tuned.

Fans knew they were in for something special. Since Tuesday afternoon the BBC had been heavily trailing the "most remarkable story



John Archer and the infamous tractor. Actor Sam Barriscale has decided his looks are wasted on radio

development". Even the serious tones of yesterday's Today programme were interrupted for a plug.

The actual reasons for John's demise are rather more prosaic than the tangled love life and whacky economic schemes which had dogged his all too short

Ambridge existence. John is played by Sam Barriscale. The actor has decided that his good looks are wasted on radio, and might be put to better use on the television.

"After 10 wonderful years with Britain's longest run-

ning soap the time is right for a change of direction," he said.

More worryingly, recent listening figures have shown a decline, and a good death always does wonders for the ratings.

The December monthly report from Rajar, the company which collates listening figures for the industry, showed a downward trend for the Archers in its afternoon, evening and Sunday omnibus slots.

Compared with December 1996 the Archers has lost

400,000 listeners for its omnibus edition, falling to around 2.2 million.

Production staff at the Archers say that the figures are a blip and that longer term figures show that the overall number of people listening to the various editions is on the increase, from about 3.4 million a week in 1996 to 3.7 million in 1997.

Vanessa Whitburn, the editor of the Archers, said that a good death on the programme was nothing new.

"It has always been a rather gentle everyday story

which has sudden dramatic occurrences. Farming is a very dangerous occupation."

What actually happened is still unclear. Tony found his son under the overturned tractor after wondering why he had been delayed getting ready for a night out with his brother, Tommy.

It appears that a lapse in concentration meant that John did not see the ditch before the tractor tumbled in.

Police were refusing to comment last night.

Leader comment, page 2

Postal workers hurt in Belfast letter-bomb blast

John Mullin
Ireland Correspondent

FOUR postal workers were injured in Northern Ireland yesterday after a letter bomb exploded at the Belfast sorting office. It was the latest in a series of devices sent through the post.

The workers, two men and two women, were the first to be hurt in the current campaign, thought to be carried out by loyalists. Police said that the bombs, packed into video cassettes, were crude but still capable of causing serious injury.

None of the workers was thought to be badly hurt. The man who handled the device was the most seriously injured. He was taken to hospital on a stretcher, suffering from facial, arm and abdominal injuries. One witness said: "There was blood everywhere."

Five devices are thought to have passed through the Belfast sorting office in the last week alone. One exploded after it was delivered to a Catholic family in the Ardoyne, north Belfast, last week. Another failed to go off when it was delivered to a Catholic man in Toomebridge, Co. Antrim. Others were intercepted.

Unionist politicians were targeted in a letter-bomb campaign last year. Devices were sent to the Ulster Unionists David Trimble and Jeffrey Donaldson, and to Robert McCartney, the UK Unionist MP for North Down. At least one constituency office worker was hurt. It is thought hardline loyalists were responsible.

Officials from the Communications Workers' Union claimed yesterday that the Royal Mail management was failing to protect its members. They said the Mail had refused to evacuate the building immediately after yesterday's explosion. The CWU ordered the 1,800 workers to leave until bomb disposal experts signalled the all-clear.

Union leaders said that there had been at least five bomb scares at the sorting office in the past week. One claimed that managers had carried suspect packages out of the building to allow work to continue. "It's madness," said Peter Hamill, area representative.

The Royal Mail was unable to say to whom the package was addressed. But it exploded on the fifth floor of the building at the National Return Letter Centre, where packages are brought from all over the UK if they are undelivered. It is thought the most

seriously hurt man had opened the package to find a return address.

John Morgan, a union official, said: "We are all shocked and disgusted by this. Postal workers are in the front line, and have been for 30 years. To the morons who are doing this, I say: Please stop. All you are doing is hurting innocent people."

The scare came as Adam Ingram, the Northern Ireland Security Minister, paid tribute to police in the Irish Republic who on Tuesday recovered a 250lb bomb near Redhills, Co. Cavan, ten miles from Enniskillen in Co. Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.

Irish police believe that it was a bomb planted by members of the Continuity IRA, the splinter group responsible for a series of car bomb attacks on Protestant towns in Northern Ireland. Security services in Northern Ireland suspect IRA members are working with CIRA. It was packed into a plastic barrel and hidden in a ditch.

Bertie Ahern, the Irish prime minister, will meet Tony Blair at Downing Street today. He is likely to suggest to Mr Blair that he should meet Sinn Féin, currently suspended from the multi-party talks, which is demanding a summit with the Prime Minister before returning.

Tiger attacks circus man

Chipperfield family employee loses arm feeding big cats

Lucy Patton

A LION tamer employed by the Chipperfield Circus family was last night recovering in hospital after his arm was bitten off and swallowed by a tiger.

The 32-year-old man, who has not been named, was helped to safety by police and paramedics after the tiger sunk its teeth into his arm, severing it just below the elbow.

The accident happened inside a compound at the circus's winter quarters at Chipperfield, Oxfordshire. Emergency services stabilised the man at the scene before he was airlifted to the

John Radcliffe hospital in Oxford. His condition was not known last night.

A spokesman for Oxfordshire ambulance trust said: "I can confirm that we have a victim whose arm has been bitten off by a tiger, just below the elbow. We understand that it has been swallowed by the tiger."

It was revealed later that the man had been feeding the tiger from outside the cage when it lunged for his arm and chewed it off.

Staff at the quarters usually use a long stick to put food into the cages, but it was believed that the victim had put his arm into the cage.

A spokesman for Thames Valley police said: "The suf-

fered extensive injuries to his left hand and lower arm. The tiger was in its cage when the incident happened."

Some of the animals at the Chipperfield site are circus animals in winter quarters, while others there are used for television, film and advertising work.

The Chipperfield family, one of the oldest circus families in Britain, has already suffered a tragedy this year.

Last month Richard Chipperfield, a 24-year-old trainer, was mauled by a tiger during a photo shoot in Florida. He had his head in the tiger's mouth when it slammed its jaws shut.

He lost part of his brain in the accident and doctors have said he will probably be paralysed if he recovers consciousness.

His brother Graham, aged 28, later shot the Bengal tiger.

Special prison unit opens to house violent inmates

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

A UNIT to house the hard core of Britain's most disruptive and dangerous prisoners was unveiled by the Prison Service yesterday.

The "close supervision centre" at Woodhill jail at Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire is designed to end the so-called "merry-go-round" whereby inmates who are very difficult to control are kept in perpetual solitary confinement by being shunted from one jail to another every 28 days or so.

The unit is being combined with two other special units at Hull and Durham prisons to provide 53 places for Britain's most violent inmates, including the hostage taker Charles Bronson.

The service says that they are the prisoners that the doctors at Ashworth, Rye House and Broadmoor high security psychiatric hospitals deem as untreatable, since — in the final analysis — the root of their problems is more criminal than mental.

Sarah Selvey, one of two psychologists at the unit, said: "You have to be wary because some of them have taken people hostage and they do have a potential for vio-



Prison psychologist Sarah Selvey

lence. But, because of that, you have to look at what triggered that, at the context.

"We are aware of looking for early warning signs and agitation, signs of aggression. I don't feel any more at risk with them than with a normal prisoner or meeting a stranger in a pub."

Four of these most difficult inmates arrived at the new unit this month, including Bronson, who has committed more crimes inside than the armed robberies that put him away.

Bronson is responsible for 10 incidents of taking hostages, more than 20 assaults

on prison officers, and twice leading rooftop protests. Also in the unit is Michael Sams, who was given four life sentences for murder and three years ago attempted to strangle a probation officer.

The other two inmates are Fred Low, who stabbed to death two fellow inmates in separate incidents, and Tony McCullagh, who received a second life sentence after he killed a cellmate.

Four more will be selected later this week, and selection will continue until the unit is full. Inmates with a history of sustained subversive activity and who cause serious dam-

age to prisons will be included. The director general of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, did not accept that Woodhill would be a British Alcatraz. "This should be a real step forward in dealing with disruptive inmates."

"The emphasis of the centres will be therapeutic rather than punitive. The most difficult inmates will have an opportunity to come to terms with their behaviour. We do not write anybody off. We are not claiming we will succeed with everyone, but I think we will make the whole prison system safer."

The unit will make a groundbreaking attempt at group therapy. It will have three types of regime, and where prisoners go will depend on their behaviour.

The harshest regime is a "rest resort" under which the inmate is locked for 23 hours a day in a basic cell, with a mattress on a raised concrete plinth, sink, toilet, small mirror, and cardboard furniture, and is allowed no contact with other prisoners.

The second level (where entrants begin) allows a limited association with other prisoners.

The third or "intervention level" gives improved living conditions, more association, counselling, structured programmes, and group therapy.

Titanic to be £19,500 peep-show

John Eazard

FOR a somewhat titanic price, the ultimate package tour peep-show will be launched today — a two-mile, £19,500-per-head voyage to the bottom of the sea to view the wreck of the liner Titanic.

"Yes, it's a fair amount of money but it's only the price of a decent car or a quality berth on a cruise," Kevin Abbey, managing director of Bakers Dolphin Travel, the group offering the trip, said yesterday.

Millvina Dean, aged 86, now

Britain's only living Titanic survivor, said: "They must be mad. Everyone's trying to cash in. It's bound to be rubberneckers who go. Nobody with a serious historical interest could afford it."

A group subsidiary, Bristol-based Wildwings, will take about 100 tourists down to circle the wreck in August and September. Some 300 miles off the Newfoundland coast, the tourists will descend in two of the pressurised Finnish-built submarines used for location shots in the Hollywood film.

The trips, due to be announced at a travel show in London's Olympia, got a fillip

yesterday from news that the film has so far grossed £275 million worldwide, overtaking Jurassic Park.

However, tourists will not get close enough to the 86-year-old wreck to see whether the film's romantic ending has come true. This shows the 1,500 lost passengers apparently restored to life, living inside the hull in Edwardian costume and applauding as Kate Winslet and Leonard DiCaprio kiss.

John Brodie-Good, managing director of Wildwings, said: "The subs will spend two to three hours around the wreck. The purpose is to see,

photograph and video the ship. There will be no physical contact. No attempt will be made to remove souvenirs or anything like that. We will respect the vessel as a grave."

Any attempt to enter the Titanic's hull would bring swift legal action from the US company which owns the salvage rights, RMS Titanic Inc, which mounted the worldwide exhibition of artefacts.

Despite protests from the dwindling band of survivors, efforts to treat the wreck as a sacrosanct graveyard have collapsed since the ocean explorer Robert Ballard discovered it in the 1980s.



Ghost stalks through familiar into the future

Susannah Frankel

CHANNEL 5's super-heroine, Xenia Warrior Princess, was clearly the inspiration behind Tanya Sarne's Ghost collection shown at the Saatchi Gallery in London yesterday.

Sarne showed herself to be every bit the show-woman, sending models striding down the runway in skin-tight bodices and sky-high boots, with gleaming gold whips worn as hipster belts and silver jewel-encrusted suspenders for all to see.

The collection showed a harder edge than is usual for the Ghost label, but the signature bias-cut slips and tunics were still its core element. For the evening, toga dresses in violet and silver were teamed with full-length quilted kimono coats.

For the first time, Sarne introduced knitwear to her repertoire — in black, pale grey, dusty lilac and pink. Necklines plunged and sides were cut away — but she is a woman's woman, so rest assured that decency will be cleverly kept intact once these hit the rails.

Sarne is showing in London for the second season, having previously preferred New York. She started the Ghost label more than 20 years ago, and now — with an outlet even in Kew! — it has an annual retail turnover of £16 million.

"My aim is always to make women feel different and make them feel good," she said yesterday.

Full London Fashion Week report: G2, page 4

6 WORLD NEWS

The Guardian Thursday February 26 1998

Open border leads to jail

Jon Henley in Paris

UP TO 100 former Italian terrorists who have lived legally in France for almost 20 years are facing extradition and imprisonment now Italy has joined the Schengen open-border accord. Police have arrested three men this month and more detentions may follow, a justice ministry spokeswoman said.

Italy's entry into the accord last October means Italian police files are now fed directly into a central database. "If your name is on one of the files in the central Schengen police database, that is enough to warrant a provisional arrest order," the spokeswoman said.

But she denied France had changed its policy, and said every effort was being made to resolve the issue. Since 1981, France has granted de facto asylum to former members of the Red Brigades and other far-left groups which terrorised Italy with bombings and assassinations throughout the 1970s.

"We undertook to abstain from all political activity, to live here in complete transparency, and to respect French law. In return, they guaranteed we would never be extradited," said Cesare Battisti, who was sentenced to life imprisonment in Italy for four murders and more than 50 armed robberies.

"Now, all of a sudden, they've dropped us. It has to be a political decision."

One of the three arrested, Sergio Tornaghi, a former member of the Red Brigades, was picked up on February 2 near Bordeaux, despite a recently issued 10-year residence permit and a 1987 French court ruling that the crimes of which he was accused — membership of an armed group and assassination — were, under Italian law, political offences.



An army truck blazes in central Athens yesterday after being hit by a petrol bomb hurled by anarchists during a protest by students, teachers and lecturers over government education reforms. PHOTOGRAPH: LOUISA GOULAMAKI

Russia 'continues to develop new germ weapons'

David Fairhall
Defence Correspondent

AS A high-level Russian delegation arrived in London yesterday to seek help in destroying vast stocks of chemical weapons, a defector from the former Soviet regime accused Russian scientists of continuing secret work on new biological weapons.

Dr Kanatjan Alibekov, now living in the United States as Ken Alibek, defected from Kazakhstan in 1992 after working as a senior official in the former Soviet biological warfare programme — supposedly cancelled two years earlier by President Gorbachev.

In newspaper and television interviews he alleged yesterday not only that "hundreds of tonnes" of anthrax bacteria were ready to load on Soviet missiles at a few days' notice in the 1980s, but that work has continued on new biological agents under the guise of defensive research.

His allegations and the Russian visit are reminders that many of the weapons of mass destruction whose clandestine development by Saddam

Clinton reviews Gulf syndrome

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has set up a board to review the defence ministry investigation of chemical, biological and other factors during the Gulf war which may have given rise to the illnesses suffered by many veterans.

Former senator Warren Rudman, chairman of the president's foreign intelligence advisory board, will chair the seven-strong panel. —AP.

Hussein has triggered confrontation in the Gulf since the end of the cold war. Russia's stockpile of chemical weapons, much of it nerve gas, is declared at 40,000 tonnes, 25 per cent more than the US stocks recorded in 1996.

Both countries are committed by the Chemical Weapons Convention to destroying these weapons within 10 years. Britain destroyed its stocks more than 40 years ago. Russia has made a slow

start, attributed to a shortage of funds (Moscow estimates the cost will be nearly \$2 billion) and equipment.

Hence the delegation, led by General Stanislav Petrov, head of Russia's Radiation, Chemical and Biological Protection Forces, who will visit the Forton Down chemical research establishment in Wiltshire today to study British technology for destroying gas weapons.

Russia and the US are also signatories of the 1972 convention banning biological weapons such as anthrax, plague and botulinum toxin. But Western intelligence has always questioned whether the Russians had really stopped work on offensive techniques.

These doubts were fuelled in 1979 by the accidental release of anthrax from a military plant at Sverdlovsk, killing at least 64 people.

Dr Alibekov says his former colleagues have continued offensive biological research in the belief that US scientists were also secretly doing so. His claim is likely to heighten the fear that these weapons will proliferate and may be used by terrorists as well as armed forces.

Mega troops declare war on Germany's neo-Nazis

Dennis Staunton in Berlin

POLICE commanders targeted at right-wing extremists in eastern Germany were hailed as a spectacular success yesterday after arresting 23 people during their first week in operation. The units are known as Mega troops, short for Mobile Units against Violence and Xenophobia.

Armed and equipped with Russian Mi-8 helicopters, the units were established by the Social Democratic state government of Brandenburg to stamp out increasing neo-Nazi violence.

"They are to prevent hooligan gathering and give potential culprits the feeling that the police are always nearby," said Axel Ladders, head of Brandenburg's criminal investigation agency.

In its first operation, a Mega unit interrupted

rightwing youths gathering for survival training at the Volletzsee, a lake outside Berlin. They arrested 11 people and seized knives, a cosh and Nazi regalia.

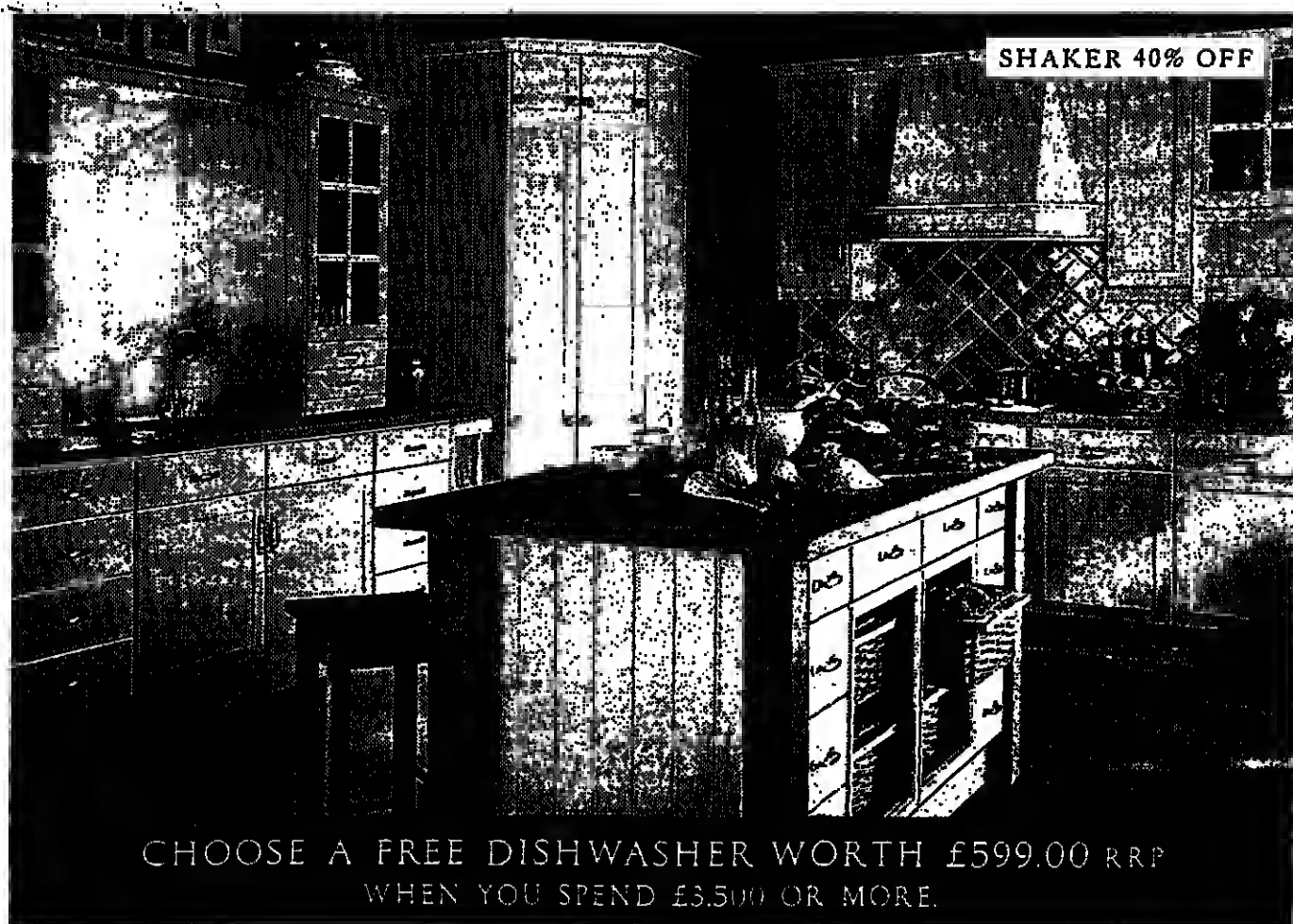
The 45 Mega officers, who are usually dressed in plain clothes, have as their emblem a swastika being crushed underfoot by Brandenburg's state symbol of a red eagle. They stamped almost 300 people and 85 vehicles during the first week and are confident that at least one of the 23 arrests will lead to a prosecution.

The scale of the problem facing the units was underlined yesterday when intelligence chiefs disclosed that the number of extreme rightwing attacks in Germany rose by at least 10 per cent last year. Almost half the incidents took place in the former communist east, where there are an estimated 45,000 extremists. Brandenburg has seen some of the worst inci-

dents. Noel Martin, a British building worker, was paralysed after right-wingers shouting racial abuse hurled a stone through his car windshield, sending the car out of control and into a tree.

Mega units have powers to break up gatherings and seize potentially dangerous objects such as baseball bats. Mr Ladders is confident of the units' continued success. "We know where these groups are and we know how they spend their free time," he said.

An American neo-Nazi known as the Farmbelt Führer, who is serving a four-year sentence for violating Germany's tough anti-extremist laws, lost an appeal at Hamburg state court to be released early. Gary Lauck, aged 44, from Lincoln, Nebraska, was convicted in 1996 of inciting racial hatred by smuggling in extreme rightwing propaganda.

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World news in brief

Emerald king held on death squad charge

COLOMBIA'S leading emerald entrepreneur was under arrest yesterday for allegedly sponsoring paramilitary death squads, the federal prosecutor's office said.

Victor Carranza, known as the emerald king, was captured on Tuesday night in his northern Bogotá home on a warrant issued in December.

About 120 dealers from 15 countries are in Bogotá for

the First International Emerald Congress, seeking to improve the image of Colombia's emerald trade and establish an international exchange.

Mr Carranza is known for having first driven leftwing rebels from the mountainous central region where 60 per cent of the world's emeralds are extracted, and then battled the Medellín drug cartel baron Gonzalo Rodriguez

Gacha for control of the emerald belt.

Rodriguez Gacha was killed in December 1996 trying to evade a police dragnet. Mr Carranza was arrested the following year but freed.

Last year prosecutors were offered evidence that Mr Carranza was sponsoring paramilitary units responsible for killing alleged guerrilla sympathisers. —AP.

Short sends aid to Serbs

BRITAIN announced its first non-emergency aid package to Republika Srpska yesterday in what the international Development Secretary, Clare Short, said was a vote of confidence in the Bosnian Serb entity's new government.

Ms Short announced an immediate payment of £1 million to support the budget, alongside a £1.1 million grant to help work on the resettlement of refugees in Bosnia.

"The election of a new democratic government in Republika Srpska, which is committed to Dayton [the accord which ended the Bosnian civil war], signals a brighter future for Bosnia," she said.

"Prime Minister [Milorad] Dodik deserves Britain's help, and he will get it." —Reuters.



Kim Dae-jung and his wife at his inauguration yesterday

Doves and boycotts for Kim

THE veteran democracy campaigner Kim Dae-jung was inaugurated president of South Korea yesterday as cannons roared, 1,500 doves soared across sunny skies, and a mood of optimism seized the capital city after months of economic gloom.

But his honeymoon proved short-lived as the opposition Grand National Party, which holds the majority of national assembly seats, boycotted a vote confirming his nominee for prime minister, Kim Jong-pil. The government coalition will try again today. —Reuters.

Army mutiny gains support

An army mutiny over pay in the remote east of Niger spread yesterday to the northern city of Agadez.

Military sources said mutineers had kidnapped the city's prefect and were driving through the streets, firing in the air. The fate of officers at the Agadez garrison was not clear. —Reuters.

UN hostages freed

Three UN monitors held hostage by gunmen in western Georgia were freed yesterday unharmed after the Georgian president, Eduard Shevardnadze, agreed to meet the kid-

nappers' political representatives in Tbilisi, writes Tom Whitehouse in Moscow.

Rebels killed
Algerian troops backed by military air-strikes have killed 95 Muslim rebels, the majority of them in the region of Tlemcen, 275 miles west of the capital, Algiers, Algerian newspapers reported yesterday. —Reuters.

Tranny-power

Thailand's first transvestite kick-boxer, Parinya Klathubata, aged 16, triumphed yesterday in five rounds before sell-out crowd at Bangkok's premier stadium, writes Nick Cumming-Bruce in Bangkok. He then humiliated his

crushed opponent further by consoling him with a kiss and cuddle.

King's killer ill
Martin Luther King's assassin, James Earl Ray, aged 69, has been moved to a prison hospital in Nashville in serious condition two weeks after undergoing heart surgery, prison officials said yesterday. —Reuters.

Victim punished

An ultra-orthodox woman in Tel Aviv who was raped by three men must now divorce her husband even though neither wants to, according to an Israeli rabbinical ruling, writes David Shorrack in Jerusalem.

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El Niño

Briton dies in mudslide

THREE people have died in this week's El Niño-related storms in California, including a Briton, Glenn Flook, aged 25, from Essex, who was enveloped in a wall of mud in Laguna Beach, Orange County. Two others died, and a third was injured, when a tree fell on a car and a truck in Claremont, a Los Angeles suburb. Some coastal areas had more than 7ins of rain in six hours, the state flood centre reported. In addition, waves of up to 17ft were expected along some beaches, and up to 2ft of snow was forecast in the mountains. Storm damage has been estimated at \$475 million (about £300 million) and 35 of the 58 counties have declared a state of emergency. Laguna Beach police said Mr Flook, on holiday with his American girlfriend, was swept away by a tide of mud. He was reported to have freed a woman and her two children before taking refuge on a roof.



Flooded houses at Clear Lake Oaks, northern California, where 500 homes have been evacuated. PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN RAMSAY

Trail of destruction around the world

FREAK global weather linked to the Pacific ocean phenomenon called El Niño is bringing a humanitarian disaster to some of the poorest people on three continents. Conservative estimates suggest that the sea-saw in atmospheric pressure over the Pacific which began last July and has changed global weather patterns may have already cost \$20 billion and caused 5,000 deaths from drought, flood and long-term damage to crops. Climatologists say El Niño may now be peaking, but the effects could be felt for many years. The British government said that there have been outbreaks of rare diseases in East Africa because of excessive dampness in usually dry, insect-free areas. "Malaria is now ravaging northern Kenya and Rift Valley Disease is spreading to areas never affected before," the Department for International Aid said.

Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International Development, gave Tanzania \$2.7 million yesterday to help make emergency repairs to its road network, devastated by floods. The destruction of main routes has resulted in food shortages, and cholera is spreading in the wake of the floods. United Nations agencies and relief groups working in flooded areas of Somalia launched an emergency appeal for \$10 million. A spokesman said: "Hundreds of thousands of people are suffering from the impact of floods. Many villages and farms remain under water." "Water and sanitation systems have collapsed, diseases are more widespread than ever and continue to put people and livestock at risk. The last harvest has been lost and malnutrition rates — especially among children — have become alarming in many areas." The World Food Programme says more than 37 million people are immediately at risk from food and drug shortages in Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana. More than 600,000 tons of emergency food aid is needed. The situation is grim in Papua New Guinea, said a Christian Aid emergency officer, Lewis Sida, who has just returned from a fact-finding tour.

"Crops are drying up. People are extremely malnourished from the drought, which has lasted more than 14 months in places. Hundreds of people have died in the highlands, where some communities are experiencing fire, frost and drought. Some areas have typhoid and many communities have lost their seed stocks." The Australian government estimates that more than 80,000 people are at "severe risk" in PNG. Christian Aid, launching a public appeal for \$500,000, said many thousands of people were homeless in Peru after flash floods south of Lima. A shanty town in Ica was recently washed away, hundreds were camping in the desert, and the Pan-American highway had been cut, resulting in food shortages. Meanwhile more than 1,000 new fires have broken out in Indonesia and Malaysia, bringing smog back to parts of Borneo. The Indonesian environment minister, Suswono Kusumaatmadja, said about 10,000 acres of land was burning in east Kalimantan province, and there were smaller fires in Sumatra. Since last year's Indonesian fires, which caused \$1.3 billion worth of damage, international economists commissioned by the World Wide Fund for Nature estimated yesterday.

How US called shots on Annan trip

Michael Gordon and Elaine Sciolino in Washington report on the manoeuvring behind the UN chief's peace mission to Baghdad

THE United States secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, and the United Nations secretary-general, Kofi Annan, held a secret meeting at his New York residence on Sunday, February 15, and discussed what eventually became the Iraqi agreement with the UN. It followed intense talks between President Clinton and his national security advisers during which they moved from a desire to hit President Saddam Hussein with the biggest military strike of the Clinton presidency to the conclusion that it would be difficult to do so without much more international support. Ms Albright was carrying a confidential paper that laid out the "red lines" or US requirements, for Mr Annan's mission to proceed. Their conversation, which lasted almost two hours, also resolved weeks of debate by Mr Clinton and his national security aides about the best way to settle the Iraqi crisis, according to senior administration officials. And it demonstrated that Washington was far more actively involved in planning the Annan mission than it acknowledged. Ms Albright laid out the "red lines" to Mr Annan. The weapons inspectors must have "operational control" over all investigations of suspected biological and chemical weapons sites in Iraq. They would also have to have unrestricted access to all sites and must serve as the sole judge of



President Clinton discusses the US build-up in the Gulf with the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, General Henry Sheltou

Iraqi compliance. And the US wanted any agreement with President Saddam in writing. As the crisis grew, Bill Richardson, the US representative to the UN, strongly opposed Mr Annan's mission. He believed he was too likely to give in to Iraqi demands. The defence secretary, William Cohen, had argued passionately for months about the threat of chemical and biological weapons, laying out a military plan and remaining sceptical that a diplomatic settlement would hold. Ultimately, Ms Albright and the national security adviser, Samuel Berger, persuaded Mr Clinton that Mr Annan's trip was a potential opportunity. During one meeting at the White House, the president made it clear the administration would support Mr Annan's trip — but only to do Washington's bidding. "You can't have Kofi going there and the United States not support it and then have military action," a senior White House official quoted Mr Clinton as saying. "The president said: 'Look, I don't want him negotiating. It's our military that is getting the inspectors back in. I want a clear consensus among the international community, a consensus on his instructions before he goes'."

'Look, I don't want him negotiating. It's our military that is getting the inspectors back in. I want a clear consensus among the international community, a consensus on his instructions before he goes'

President Clinton

Pentagon comes under attack by hackers

Martin Kettle in Washington

THE Pentagon's unclassified computer networks were hit by "fairly heavy cyber attacks" from hackers during the military and diplomatic stand-off with Iraq, a senior defence department official revealed yesterday. The assault on some of the United States military's most closely guarded computer systems during the past two weeks was "the most organised and systematic attack the Pentagon has seen to date", said John Hamre, the deputy secretary of defence. But the attacks, which are being investigated by the Pentagon, the FBI and the justice department, did not appear to have a direct connection with the Iraqi confrontation. They had "all the appearances of a gambol" and were probably perpetrated by "a small number of individuals", he said. The hackers' attacks were concentrated on the Pentagon's unclassified systems, such as personnel and payroll records, Mr Hamre said. All the services based in the Pentagon were "penetrated to some degree". Although "widespread and modestly sophisticated", he characterised the attacks as "vandalism or vandalism". "Our classified networks were intact and not penetrated," Mr Hamre said. The attacks will inevitably underline concern about potentially devastating assaults by hackers and "cyber terrorists". Last October, President Bill Clinton's commission on critical infrastructure protection warned that "the potential for disaster is real". The report, by retired air force general Robert Marsh, set out a five-year plan to increase the security of sensitive government and private sector computer systems in defence, power, banking and telecommunications. In December, interior and justice ministers from the Group of Seven leading economic powers, including the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, signed an agreement in Washington to coordinate efforts against digital crime.



Anderson: earlier denied rumours of marital violence

Tommy Lee held for attack on Anderson

Christopher Hood in Los Angeles

TOMMY Lee, the drummer in the heavy metal band Mötley Crüe, faces a possible jail sentence after his arrest yesterday in Malibu, California, for allegedly beating his wife, the former Baywatch actress, Pamela Anderson. Lee was held on \$1 million (£620,000) bail, twice the normal amount, as he was already on probation for breaking a photograph of his wife in a punch-up. Under California law, if probation is broken, a jail sentence usually follows. Lee was arrested at the couple's seaside home after police were called to the scene. Anderson, who had a torn bleeding fingernail and a large bruise on her back, said her husband had attacked her after an argument. Lee, who has the word "mayhem" tattooed on his shoulder, did not deny earlier this month to assaulting a security guard at a concert in Phoenix. He had been attending "anger management" therapy as part of his probation. Their marriage broke down in 1996 amid rumours of domestic violence. They have two sons, Brandon, aged 18 months and Dylan, two months.

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Israeli left and right risk a battle of the graves

David Sherrock in Kiryat Arba, Hebron

YISRAEL Goldstein is slumped against the grave of his son Baruch, "the martyr," according to the inscription on his tomb. His deadened eyes suddenly blaze as he shouts: "They will have to kill me first before they move my son. Do these ghouls have no souls?" It is the fourth anniversary of the Hebron massacre, when Baruch Goldstein opened fire on Muslims praying at the Tomb of the Patriarchs. He killed 29 Palestinians before being beaten to death by the worshippers. In the intervening years his grave has become a place of pilgrimage for Israel's far-right, who come to pray and read the words on the solid stone block: "Of blessed memory, may the Lord avenge his blood... who gave his life for the state of Israel, its Torah and its land." The leftwing establishment is worried by the scenes at the tomb, and a bill to move it from a landscaped corner of the hard-line Kiryat Arba settlement on the edge of Hebron to an ordinary Jewish settlement has gained wide support in the Knesset. Yesterday dozens of Peace Now activists, shep-

herded by scores of troops and police, arrived at Kiryat Arba to demonstrate in support of the relocation of his remains, to Yisrael Goldstein's distress and the anger of his fellow settlers. "My son is a decorated war hero, he saved lives his whole life, he was dedicated to the people," Mr Goldstein said. "The rabbis have ruled that you do not move a grave. My friends, it's time to bind up wounds, not to dig up graves. They are killing our family all over again. 'It's time to stop, it's time to stop! May God have mercy on us all.'"

He could not condemn Goldstein's action, he said. "Because of the situation when he did it." The settlers claim that Palestinians from Hebron were about to massacre them at the close of the Muslim holy month, Ramadan. "He did what he did. We have a war between nations and in wars people get killed. Every Jew killed by an un-Jew is a martyr according to Jewish law." Palestinians stoned Israeli border police Jews from rooftops in the Kalanidia refugee camp on the West Bank yesterday, and the police returned live fire as they came to the rescue of a trapped officer. The clashes began after Israel sealed off the entrance to the camp with a 12ft wall. "When they do this to us they are telling us they want the intifada back — and we are willing to give it to them," a resident said.

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Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

THE mystery over the government's unwillingness to knight Sean Connery, despite his status as a tax exile who has condoned the beating of women, may have been solved, thanks to Lord Sewel, a junior minister at the Scottish Office. In the House of Lords yesterday, Lord Sewel was questioned on the matter by the Labour peer Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, who asked him to confirm that Donald Dewar vetoed the honour. "I do not think that my honourable friend is in the business of vetoing anything in terms of the way in which the Scottish parliament will proceed," replied the noble Lord. "I believe it was Mr Connery who was Dr No." Aha, so that's it. They stopped the knighthood for fear of creating a dangerous precedent. Make Dr No a knight, and where would it end? An Earldom for Blofeld, His Grace, Duke Oddjob... before long even the white cat would have a place on the Privy Council. He doffed to Lord Sewel, then, for sorting it all out, and we look forward to more of his Wildean thrusts as the parliament progresses.

REAKTROUGH seems imminent in the quest to improve Mandy Mandelson's media image. We have spoken to John Underwood of media training company Clear Communications, and he is willing to take Mandy on. "I'd be only too pleased to advise my old friend," says Mr Underwood, whose former position as Labour's director of communications uniquely qualifies him for the challenge. "He should place himself in my hands. I'm sure I could do some thing to him... I mean for him."

THE social security select committee was treated to an engaging ideological contest when it met yesterday to consider welfare reform. In the morning, Harriet Harman and Frank Field spoke about New Labour's plans for a lean, mean welfare state, and after lunch a delegation arrived from the Slovakian government. The Express took a different approach. In Slovakia, a woman explained, they pay maternity leave for 3 years. The government is trying to increase it to five years, but mothers are resisting, because they are sick of staying at home. Perhaps Harriet may just have time, before she is shuffled off into less exacting pastures, to arrange a mass transfer.

THIS month's Prospect magazine is enlivened by a debate between the brothers Hitchens about the legacy of the 1960s. Vanity Fair's Christopher puts the liberal point of view, and Peter of the Express does not. The brothers were late substitutes, it seems, after the first choices pulled out. My sane and rational friend refused to debate with Tariq Ali, thinking this beneath his dignity, and then Ali refused to debate with Peter, for reasons unknown. Peter is a worthy replacement for dear old Paul, having made the same political journey, but there is one subject on which he refuses to budge. "I don't care what your readers say about it," he insists. "I did not have a beard."

CONGRATULATIONS to the Phoenix Motor Company in Buckinghamshire, whose owner Eric Needham has received a letter from the Good Garage Guide, Promoting Inclusion in the book, with a rating of 96 per cent, and enclosing a certificate, editor John Robertson wrote "Being featured in the guide will guarantee new customers." Perhaps not, Mr Needham is delighted, although not quite delighted enough to reopen the garage, which he closed back in July.

IT SAYS SEARCH TO SEE IF YOUR BENEFIT HAS BEEN RESTORED.



What the Blair Government thinks of British culture: not a lot

Hugo Young



POLITICS can be the dirtiest word in the English language. To call a man political locates him among the lowest forms of life, and to call a venture party political guarantees its place below the salt of public approval. Better to believe, in this mental landscape, that politics doesn't actually exist. Thus, when it's proposed that High Court judges, now being advertised for, might usefully be interrogated to discover their political-social leanings, the legal establishment has a nervous breakdown. Judges? Political? How dare you! They're princes of non-politics, virgins without attitude. Once a man becomes a judge, whatever law he's making, he has no such thing as politics.

The Millennium Dome pleads the same beguiling case. It stands as far above party politics as those colossal tent-poles stand above the derelict land at Greenwich. That's what the Prime Minister urged this week. The project has made the transition from controversial embryo to settled national institution that qualifies it for universal acclamation. Critics are now classified as carpers who must be suborned by moral blackmail into silence. The Dome is, and always will be, even unbuilt, it apparently belongs with the Eiffel Tower. Purgatory of every trace of party politics, it begs all good people to come to the aid of the country.

This reading is itself a political trick. Whatever else it may not be, the Dome is certainly political. The decision to build it was a totally political act, and the decision to sustain it is the harnessing of the millennium to ends that are party political. You can see in every word the Prime Minister says how intimately it is linked in his mind with the New Britain he believes he is fashioning. It's the apotheosis of one aspect — in the

end, perhaps the most telling aspect — of New Labour's first term, in style and content the acme of the sales pitch Mr Blair will make at the next election, reaching its climax at the very moment, about two years out, when the electoral outcome always starts to be determined.

How can anyone pretend the Dome is above or beside the party? It booms and resonates with New Labourish signals: abstractions such as "the spirit of the future", or possibly the future of the spirit: buzz-words about feeling and perception and British confidence: hyperbole about Britain at the centre of Britain's universe: the language of feel-good salesmanship that has so conspicuously replaced political argument in the front line of Labour discourse. The Dome is proving to be a great megaphone for the pain-free verbiage of the new politics.

It's also the test-bed for the politico-commercial complex that has become the proof of New Labour inclusiveness. What's not paid for by the state will be handled by the Higher Sponsorship. This will produce spectacular struggles for power, as the great corporations fight for position, treading the line between dignity and commerce, between selfless millennial patriotism and making damn sure the brand-names don't get too subliminal.

Succeed or fail, this inner struggle may make a diverting spectacle. More enduring, a party that wants to be the business party joins hands across the Dome with a hustling world that's storing up plenty of favours to call in. If it works, there'll be no more brilliant proof that New Labour has completed its shift from a party of belief to the party of consensus.

So this is party politics all

right, for which Michael Heseltine's presence is mere camouflage. Heseltine himself, unlike his Dome, is certainly above politics, seeing out his final years as the custodian of a project that's plainly closer to his heart than the party. Such piggism was, after all, Heseltine's idea in the first place. Side by side, he and Peter Mandelson are achieving for it the status of national shrines, the kind of which even this newspaper has acquiesced. They're still a

The Dome is proving to be a great megaphone for the pain-free verbiage of the new politics

few sponsors short of a hospitality stadium, but they've been quite successful in working the con-trick which says that, because the Great Exhibition was denounced before it started, the Millennium Dome is certain to be a triumph.

All this puts the Tory Party in a quandary, which is hardly resolved by the de-canting quest, as a condition of the Dome becoming an all-party project, that William Hague should be allowed to co-opten it. If he doesn't agree, he can be accused of being a killjoy at what the Government has derisively called a great national event. But if he does, he becomes an accomplice at the inaugural event, arranged at lottery expense, of Mr Blair's second election campaign. Not for the first time, the Tories look like being trapped beneath the Labour juggernaut.

It seems important, for all their puniness, that they

should keep their distance. The politics of this thing need to be unrelentingly exposed, and if the Tories are co-opted, the silence of the official opposition will have been bought for what is an illusion: the higher national good. There's an elementary reason for parliamentary non-compliance, which is the need to keep track of how \$400 million of public money is being spent, and to go on asking questions about the quite extraordinary farrago of uncertainty and indecision over the contents and meaning of the Dome. But there's a bigger reason to reject the moral blackmail of the embrace.

As a political choice, the Dome is part of a rotten message. The signals it sends out may be convenient for Labour but, in the totality of the Labour project, they are depressing and wrong-headed. They're a statement about the Blair Government's thoughts of British culture. There's been a lot of trite talk about schools and hospitals, as if the only test for public spending must be rigidly utilitarian. Philistine nonsense.

But comparisons with arts spending are highly relevant. Music, theatre, museums, visual arts, opera: many temples of great culture, all over the country, are struggling to survive, while a fortune exceeding that spent on the entire Getty Museum in Los Angeles, which was built for the centuries to house work for the ages, is lavished on a cultural statement that is proud to proclaim its utter ephemerality.

Yesterday, the nation was coming on side. A lot of dutiful people were trying to make the best of flatter-coasters and living islands and the hugest androgynous world has ever seen. Millions will surely go and have a look. But we will know what Labour is about, and mark the Hallé's epitaph.

Vanity of the bonfires

Peter Hetherington



AS A campaign to defend a rural way of life, a long forgotten arcadia where everyone knew their place, it should go down as one of the great collective hijackings of all time. Tonight the hills of Britain will glow with 500 bonfires.

They will signal the start of a weekend campaign culminating in an estimated 200,000 descending on London for a two-mile "March for the Countryside" from the Embankment to Hyde Park. At a Sunday rally, the rich men from the castles, and their poorer employees at their gates — generously provided with transport from all over Britain by the aristocrats and the newer rich — will be joined by the hunting and shooting set, misty eyed, Barbour-jacketed townies lucky enough to have a small plot in the country, tenant farmers feeling the pinch, and even groves of whippet and ferret enthusiasts from working men's clubs. What a collection!

"LISTEN to us," they will yell, echoing the sentiments of another demo held last year in protest at Michael Foster's private member's bill to ban hunting with dogs.

For the great majority of us, some of whom really do live in the country, this disparate army could easily be dismissed as a bit of harmless fun — if the Government weren't taking it so seriously. But as we know by now, courtesy of Tony Blair's contribution to this week's Country Life, ministers are certainly listening to them, although I can't imagine why.

On the back of Foster's innocuous initiative, backed by a majority of voters — although I remain agnostic — we have been reminded ad nauseam by a newly-formed Alliance, the people behind the bonfires and the demos, that the countryside is in crisis, from falling farming incomes, to threats to the green belt, and those dreadful ramblers demanding more access to land (which, in the case of the Duke of Westminster, was originally granted to his forebears by the Normans in 1088 for being on the right side at the Battle of Hastings).

In one way, of course, they're right. There is a crisis in the countryside. The trouble is, they conveniently ignore the problems experienced daily by uncomplaining country folk whose way of life was constantly under threat for the last 10 or so years without a murmur of protest from the green-jacketed brigade, now supported by William Hague and a party desperately seeking a cause. Yes, that opposition front bench really does contain shadow ministers who were part of a government which agreed to an additional 300,000 acres of rural England being "urbanised" between 1980-90 alone,

when only 40 per cent of new homes were being built on so-called "brownfield" sites and when out-of-town shopping centres were being approved without blinking, at the expense of the city (they now account for more than a quarter of total shopping space). John Prescott, trying hard to reverse the trend, does have a point when he yells "hypocrites".

But the crisis in the countryside goes much deeper. Council house sales — the very first Tory privatisation — have effectively removed a public housing pool for low paid workers who can never afford a home of their own (and the dwindling band of full-time farm workers, 59,000 at the last count, earn £4.12 an hour with casuals on a miserly £3.06).

Tight county council budgets have forced countless village schools to close. Bus services are being cut. According to the Rural Development Commission, nearly half of England's rural shops have closed since 1991 alone. Pubs are going the same way. Result? Country folk are being forced to move out and more affluent townies are moving in.

Take the village of Kielder, in north Northumberland, near the Scottish Border. When Billy Charters bought the village shop 15 years ago there were almost 40 children in the modern local school and the population stood at 300. Today it has halved. The school, with seven pupils, is fighting a battle for survival.

As the Forestry Commission, which provided much of the work, cut back and privatised estates, employment in Kielder dropped dramatically. Then the sawmill closed five years ago. Twenty jobs went. "It was the equivalent of a shipyard closing," recalled Billy.

Once he was a hunting enthusiast. No longer. If you have a problem with foxes, he says, you go to the local gamekeeper and he shoots them. Hunting, in short, is just a blood sport and, frankly, irrelevant to a rural way of life.

This weekend, the Countryside Alliance — those people who have cynically hijacked the rural debate — will make much of the wider crisis in farming. They will point an accusing finger at the Agriculture Minister, Jack Cunningham, who can hardly be blamed for falling incomes or the BSE crisis — and the £4.5 billion it has so far cost the taxpayer (£1.5 billion this year alone).

Don't be fooled. Agricultural support is currently cost-

The Countryside Alliance have cynically hijacked the rural debate

ing each taxpayer £4 a week. Some hill farmers are undoubtedly under threat for the last 10 or so years without a murmur of protest from the green-jacketed brigade, now supported by William Hague and a party desperately seeking a cause. Yes, that opposition front bench really does contain shadow ministers who were part of a government which agreed to an additional 300,000 acres of rural England being "urbanised" between 1980-90 alone,

A union leader stays loyal to welfare reforms through thick and thin

There was no U-turn

Ken Jackson

THE critics were wrong. Welfare reform will produce a better welfare state. Plans for a Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) prove that those who condemned Labour for modernising welfare were guilty of jumping the gun. Labour built the welfare state. Tony Blair is building reform. The simple truth is that those most in need will be helped more by reform than they were by the status quo. Despite higher spending, more families live in poverty now than in 1979. Four million children are denied the everyday essentials we take for granted. Labour could not afford to let the scale of misery go unchallenged. Britain really does deserve

better. And Tony Blair is delivering on the promise to modernise welfare. A WFTC will ensure children from poor families do not continue to suffer alone. While the Conservatives ignored their cries for help, Labour is building support, responding to the demands for help. Whether from families in or out of work, one parent or two, poor children will benefit from welfare reform.

Yes, the value of the lone parent benefit cuts will be restored. But that is not the point. And it is not a Government climb down. That is what our opponents would have the public believe. No, a WFTC puts into practice the long-term aim of helping people into work.

Labour is changing the culture of welfare, from

one of dependency to freedom. Those hailing a Government U-turn should raise their sights. Welfare reform is about much more than money.

That is why my union, the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical

Four million children are denied everyday essentials

Union (AEEU), refused to join the critics. Because like Tony Blair, we know that Labour must deliver on its promise to modernise welfare. For no one should have been in any doubt. Labour could not have been more clear before the election. In government,

Labour would seek a fundamental change in the culture of welfare. Its practice, its values — all would be modernised to fit the needs of the next century, not the last.

And rightly so. As a long-standing member of the Labour Party, I am proud of one of our party's greatest achievements — the creation of the welfare state. Generations have been helped by the system we founded. But sentimentality is no excuse for avoiding the truth. The welfare state may be a crowning achievement, but reform is not taboo. Under the Conservatives, it parted company with Labour's principles. Labour was entrusted to bring it back into line.

True, the critics may use a WFTC to try to derail

reform. By focusing on the level of benefit, they may argue against further reviews. But the opposite is true. The critics will be wrong once again. If the Budget does deliver the new credit, it will justify reform. It will show that

Working people know that Tony Blair was right

there is no other option but to reform. Without reform, poverty in Britain will remain.

And working people know that Tony Blair was right to press ahead. All too often the advocates of higher spending forget that ordinary working people

fund their aspirations. Every working day, every ordinary working man and woman pays £14 to meet the cost of welfare. They do so because they know that without the welfare state, many in this country would have nothing.

But they will be reluctant to pay more for a system they believe does not work. Working people will not forgive Labour if it ducks further reform. They know that there are hard choices, for they face them every day. After all, they live in the real world, not in ivory towers. Many of them returned to Labour in 1997 because Labour stopped defunding what clearly did not work. Let's not lose them again. We will if we take them for granted.

During the 1980s, the AEEU worked to modernise

Labour because we believed the party had lost its way. The same applies to welfare. We need to apply the values that guided the pioneers of welfare to the present day. A WFTC shows that Labour is serious about providing a better system for those most in need.

Welfare reform does not mean abandoning our commitment to relieving poverty, to striving for a fairer, more just society. Those who spread myths that it does were wrong. No, it is our responsibility to provide a better system. Those of us committed to welfare know that we have no other option.

Ken Jackson is General Secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union

Guardian

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to the Editor

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Reprieve for lone parents

Now for a poverty audit

BELATEDLY lone parents have something to celebrate. Labour supporters — including the 47 backbench rebel Labour MPs who voted against the Government's lone-parent benefit plans — have something to smile about too. Poor lone parents will not be worse off from April next year, despite Labour's cuts to two separate benefits. The Prime Minister was coy when challenged by the Tory leader at Question Time about these plans splashed in yesterday's *Guardian*. He denied Labour had committed a U-turn over its cuts. But he did not deny that other increases which lone parents would receive from April 1999 would more than compensate for the loss of the £4.95 premium paid to those on income support and the £6.05 lone-parent benefit. The plans are due to be revealed in Gordon Brown's Budget on March 17.

If these plans are confirmed, then anti-poverty campaigners can celebrate. Of all benefit claimants, lone parents remain the poorest of the poor. Research by the Policy Studies Institute showed unemployed lone parents were considerably worse off than unemployed couples with children. Almost one-third were suffering from three or more serious symptoms of hardship (debt, inability to buy crucial food, inadequate clothing) compared to one-quarter of couples. It was the Conservatives who introduced the special premium in 1988 on the grounds that one-parent families faced higher costs than couples. Even the Tories, who abolished the old long-term benefit

rate, were agreed in 1988 that lone parents needed special help to meet their extra costs. Three-quarters of them had qualified for the long-term benefit rate — payable to people who had spent more than a year on benefits.

Now the Tories insist that benefits to meet these extra costs should be withdrawn. In the skewed language used by William Hague yesterday: "The benefits system should not discriminate against married couples." Also, Labour also appears to have bought this argument, for although they are planning to compensate poor lone parents for the abolition of their special benefits, the new payments will be available to both single parents and couples. Lone parents will no longer have special supplements to meet their extra costs. No progressive government would remove such supplements without first demonstrating that the extra costs no longer existed or had been exaggerated.

The Government's own social security advisory committee urged ministers to examine the costs before taking any decisions. Equal treatment for unequal needs is wrong. Labour should not climb aboard the Tory moral bandwagon.

There was some other good news yesterday. Frank Field, whose green paper on welfare reform is due on March 26, declared his readiness to set targets for the Government to aim at. The only target he was ready to mention was the numbers in work measured against the historic position of the economic cycle. But once the principle of targets is established, then the way is open for all manner of progressive benchmarks: minimum income, reductions in gross income inequalities, even an annual poverty audit.

A minimum income standard was first proposed by Labour's Commission on

Social Justice — which was quietly pigeonholed before the election. Poverty reduction targets would allow ministers to monitor systematically the state of inequality. Labour's biggest challenge is closing the obscene gap between rich and poor.

Korea's future

Priority: a thaw with the North

IT IS not every new president whose official biography recounts how he was nearly assassinated by a previous regime. Nor that the people who kidnapped him and would have dumped him with weights tied to his legs in the sea — but for a lucky reprieve — worked for the man whom he now wants to become prime minister. The story of Kim Dae-jung is as remarkable as that of Nelson Mandela with whom he is often compared. And the new story of South Korea which began yesterday with his inaugural ceremony looks like being a dramatic one too.

The economic crisis in which South Korea is floundering — with a million jobs likely to be lost this year — creates extreme difficulty for an incoming president after an election in which, for the first time ever, the ruling party's candidate has been defeated. Mr Kim has appealed for the opposition to give him a year's grace. Yesterday they boycotted a vote on the appointment as prime minister of Mr Kim's expediently chosen coalition partner (and ex-founder of the Korean CIA) Kim Jong-pil. But however this problem is resolved, Mr Kim still has the virtue of making a clean start.

Mr Kim scores by recognising that his country's troubles do not merely stem from bad debts, over-diversification and other forms of economic error. He speaks instead of a "collusive link between politics and

business" and insists that "political reform must precede everything else." Korea is a society whose political culture is still heavily marked by patronage, deference and collusion — the same evils which have held back real change in Japan. Instead Mr Kim promises participatory democracy — government by the people. It may only be rhetoric so far but it is new rhetoric.

Mr Kim's biggest unknown factor lies across the Demilitarised Zone in Pyongyang. His call for reconciliation yesterday was fresher in tone than the familiar proposals it contained. But it did include one important new element — the suggestion that South Korea would not object if Pyongyang improved relations separately with Washington or Tokyo. Seoul's distaste for an international dimension to intra-Korean relations has previously been an obstacle, though the bigger problems have come from Pyongyang. Mr Kim says that reunification will take time. The real extent of famine in the North is still obscure. South Korean officials have not helped by claiming that the food shortage has been invented by the Pyongyang regime. The last thing that anyone in Seoul wants is for a destitute North to collapse into the arms of a crisis-bound South. Yet if the President's new tone leads to more practical gestures — such as lifting outdated bans on contacts with the North — that will be a hopeful step forward.

Ambridge death

It could do with a few more

SO farewell then John Archer, oldest son of the constantly squabbling Pat and Tony, grandson of the impossibly smug Peggy, and purveyor of the finest organic pork in

Borsetshire. He two-timed the lovely Hayley with a scheming single mother called Sharon, then went on a bender, partying and clubbing into the early hours. And nobody, but nobody, gets away with that in Ambridge. Last night, as listeners to Radio 4's *The Archers* will already know, the village Romeo with a passion for pigs, mobile discos and cricket (he's the only member of the Ambridge cricket team to have won the single-wicket trophy twice) had his comeuppance.

Just hours after his proposal of marriage to nursery teacher Hayley was turned down (he was so nearly redeemed) young Archer was found stone cold dead underneath an overturned tractor near Bridge Farm, the victim of a tragic farm accident. His parents are bereft, the village is in crisis. John played fast and loose, and he paid the ultimate price.

The Archers is good at bad men — we've had serial woman-beater Simon Pemberton; fraudster Cameron Fraser, who broke Lizzy's heart; and criminal Clive Horobin, who brought nothing but chaos and destruction to Ambridge. They make good listening, like Grant and Phil Mitchell make good EastEnders viewing. Sadly they've all gone. And now John, who may have behaved badly, but he certainly lived up to a mundane story of everyday country folk.

So where do the Archers go from here in bright new Blair's Britain? Maybe there should be a Titanic-style cast clear-out. Get rid of the homophobic Sid Perks, who's trying to keep wife Cathy in the pub kitchen; axe the increasingly tedious family man, David Archer, and do away with the incessantly whingeing Old Labour Mike Tucker. Let the Archers die a death and let a new Grundy dynasty greet the millennium.

Letters to the Editor

It's not funny

THE implication in what I assume Mark Steel meant to be a humorous article (Sad-dam games, February 25) that I was disappointed that there was to be no attack on Iraq is offensive, nonsensical and utterly wrong.

There is a huge and difficult responsibility of deploying a lot of servicemen and women — most of them young — to serve in the Gulf against the threat again posed by Saddam's regime to his neighbours and the wider region. Only a fool would take pleasure in seeking these brave, selfless people ordered into great danger.

Kofi Annan rightly said on Monday: "Diplomacy can achieve a lot, but a lot more can be achieved by diplomacy backed by firmness and force." I take enormous pleasure and great relief in the fact that it was the threat, not the use, of force which led to Saddam's comprehensive climb down. George Robertson MP, Secretary of State for Defence, Whitehall.

FRANCIS Whelan berates former members of the short-lived Supper Club, bravely singling out Clare Short for his oh-so-witty invective (How Clare squares it, February 25).

Presumably, Whelan and his ilk would rather Prescott, Short, Meacher et al vacated their Cabinet posts to the courageously principled second tier of junior ministers and, in so doing, create some space for the frustrated talents of the *nouveau arrivistes* who represent all that is best about the Labour movement. Then they could rejoin the principled purists of the Campaign Group to refashion the sterile postures and reminiscence on the glorious defeats of the 1980s. Michael Allen, London.

Some big ideas for the Dome

I WAS amused to see that the Millennium Dome is to be host to a large human form in which visitors can walk around (Back to the future, with Dome of the Seventies, February 25). But no one has cited Hon ("She"), an earlier walk-in figure who was created and built in 1965 in Stockholm by a group of artists and was a great public success.

The Dome could be a wonderful opportunity for contemporary artists to design and build something really new and fresh to stimulate our imaginations, but at present it seems to be relying on a bunch of exhibition designers recycling ideas. Mark Dixon (artist), Stowmarket, Suffolk.

IF the Dome is to fulfil Tony Blair's ambition for a "symbol of British confidence, a monument to our creativity", then surely it must include a herd of cows; a reproduction of a sink council house estate; a

display of tabloid newspapers; a "live" soccer crowd; Britain's R&D performance; a history of Northern Ireland; a leaking water main; the social and cultural environment of single-parent families; lawyers and judges in fancy dress dispensing miscarriages of justice; a re-enactment of a child-abuse inquiry; and a blank space reserved for a bill of rights. Michael Bromley, School of Journalism, Cardiff University.

AS a boy of 11 I visited the Festival of Britain and recall it as being full of excitement, new design and the future. Now a veterinary physician, I am well aware of the magic and importance of biology, but reports of the content of the Dome so far seem to be of the "come and gawp" variety.

If the edifice could be designed to inspire just a tiny percentage of its visitors to take up research careers in biology, then Britain would ben-

efit from the millennial glow. Dr Christopher Chesney, Exeter.

ASSUMING the Baby Dome is used for attractions for the very young, opera performances and fine art exhibitions could be staged in the Posh Dome (black tie only), and athletic events could take place in the Sporty Dome. Kids might find white-knuckle rides in the Scary Dome, and finally Chris Evans could be given his head in the Ginger Dome. Do you think that Mr Mandelson is just breaking it to us gently? Michael J Stephenson, London.

THE last 1,000 years have seen the rise and fall of many empires. History can be made interesting and not too "cerebral", as anyone who has been to the York exhibition in York can tell you. Let's use the Dome to show how we got here

and to make us wonder what we could now aim for. Richard Milken, Exeter.

YOU ask us to support the Dome (The show is on the road, February 25) because it will unite all of us, but the plans for the so-called Spirit Level include only religious forms of "faith and belief" which will exclude the millions of people who have other ideas. Nicolas Walter, Rationalist Press Association, London.

WHEN did the Dome become something exclusively for children, the only people who cannot legally contribute to its lottery funding? Is the designers taken into account the fact that what an eight-year-old boy considers to be the height of cool now will be the nerdiest thing in two years' time? A L Crocker, Shoreham, Kent.

On Guardian values

WHY does portraying James Bond entitle someone to be considered for inclusion in the honours list (Connerly denied a knighthood, February 23)? And why is the honours system used to provide further reward for actors, musicians and sports people — most already have the adulation of millions and a bank balance to match. Surely their egos don't need any more massaging? In contrast, G2 led with the story of William Atkinson, the headmaster responsible for the resurrection of another man's childhood (Hope comes to Hill School, February 23). I wonder if he will make the front page when he doesn't get offered a knighthood? Simon Baylis, Haywards Heath, W Sussex.

I AM thinking of running a sweep on the date in the future when your Corrections and Clarifications column takes up an entire page. Or will you ditch it before you let this happen? What happens to the people who keep making these mistakes? I think we should be told. John Mobbs, Stockport.

I WAS beginning to think the Guardian was losing its sense of proportion. Its decision to relegate to the inside pages the medical condition of a pampered, self-indulgent, gin-soaked geriatric, proves it has not (Princess Margaret stable after stroke, February 25). Congratulations, Delwyn Swingewood, London.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used. *Country Diary* can be found on Page 16.

Another reading

TWO of my elder daughter's children are dyslexic (Dyslexia shown to be hereditary, February 23). Yet, both parents are science graduates from Cambridge, and there is no family history of dyslexia. My granddaughter is following a university course in pharmacy, although she still experiences difficulties in reading and writing. The boy, aged 12, is severely dyslexic. He is good at sports, has great common sense, and has been singled out by his RE teacher as a model of politeness, kindness and honesty. Dyslexia is not a disease. It is a sign that a child has received other talents than reading and writing. Simone Crawley, Stockport.

Home truths for mumsy blobs

SPEAK for yourself, Kate Figs, about how motherhood turns intelligent women into fearful, watchful, exhausted, children's-TV watching mumsy blobs. I was determined to avoid this stuff — and did. When my children were younger, I kept all my childish friends, had some evenings out, read books, took fitness classes, held a demanding job and still had time to spend with the tots. And if you have a reasonable partner, there's no reason that each of you can't go away on your own for a few days from time to time.

Sure, having children is a big job, but this kind of wall-



indulgence makes it even harder for mothers to take full part in the workforce and society: such an article makes childless women and most men regard mothers as self-absorbed, helpless homebodies who aren't fit for the mainstream. A few years later my children are lovely, independent people who know that even

their mother is entitled to a life. Not a bad lesson to learn. Besides, Kate Figs is being economical with the truth. She's a well-paid writer/journalist who self-evidently has more in her life than the brand of neurotic, suffocating motherhood that she describes. Gloria McShane, Richmond, North Yorks.

Prohibition men

David McKie

THE tabloids call "beef martyrdom" loomed. The hit squad here came from Rother Council, which had previously issued a warning. No doubt they had been specially trained in how to proceed in beef martyrdom cases, though there can't be that many precedents. One obvious area to study is the prohibition of liquor in the US from 1920 onward. It may not be long before one of these Beefwatch patrols models itself on the famous New York double act of Izzy and Moe.

Izzy was Isadore Einstein, a cheery, overweight, waddling figure who came to the job untainted by any experience. Moe Smith was built on same lines as Izzy, but knew rather more about snooping. Between them, in the space of five years or so, they rounded up well over 4,000 offenders, of whom 95 per cent were prosecuted successfully. They confiscated 5 million bottles

of liquor and sundry other containers of forbidden fluids beside. Their methods, as recorded by a reporter called Herbert Astbury, represented a triumph ofchutzpah. Izzy, Astbury says, would come hurtling into a gin mill with his agent's badge proudly displayed and shout: "How about a drink for a hard-working prohibition agent?" The bartender, laughing and shaking his head at this ludicrous act of impersonation, would serve up a drink, and Izzy would nab him.

On one occasion, Moe lugged a shivering Izzy into a bar and claimed the poor man was suffering from frostbite. A sympathetic barman whipped out a bottle and found himself under arrest. Raiding a posh place in Brooklyn, they dressed up to the nines and equipped themselves with a couple of blondes. When they asked for a drink the head waiter de-

mended references: Izzy pulled out the first visiting card he found in his pocket, which gave the name of a rabbi. A bottle of whiskey was duly produced. "He deserved to be arrested," cried Izzy as they towed the miscreant away. "Imagine a rabbi with a blonde and no beard!"

Their very success did for them in the end. Their adventures, some real, some invented, were splashed across the papers to a point where superiors grew aghast, even introducing a rule that any agent whose name appeared in the prints would be automatically suspended. Threatened with a switch to Chicago, where his victims' retribution might very well have been swifter and nastier, Izzy refused to go, and in late 1925 left the service. Prohibition survived, just about, for a further eight years.

I found the story in a book called *The Aspirin Age*, pub-

lished by Penguin in the mid-Sixties. If you see it in a secondhand bookshop, grab it. It also contains a mordant portrait of President Calvin Coolidge by Irving Stone.

THE one thing most people know about Coolidge is that Dorothy Parker told he was dead, asked: "How did they know?" (At least, that's what I'd always thought that she said; but my dictionary of quotations has her saying: "Why, I never even knew he was alive" — which isn't nearly so neat.)

At least he was honest, which was just as well after three lurid years of Warren Gamaliel Harding. But he also subscribed with rare passion to the dreary, empty right-wing doctrine of minimal government, sub-contracting as much as he could to big business, spending much of his time lying down, and never

lifting a finger, on principle, to avert the stock market crash. He was also famously taciturn, even by the standards of a state (Vermont) known for distrust of the garrulous and a buttoned-up family. His grandfather and father, who rarely said much themselves, were moved to remark: "He ain't gabby."

Stone recounts the story of a woman at a party who confessed to Coolidge that she'd taken a bet she could conjure three words out of him. "You lose," he replied. But he doesn't report the occasion when Coolidge gave a rare interview. Questions had to be submitted beforehand. The reporter was ushered into the presence and as he read each one out, Coolidge replied "no comment". As he left, the President called him back. "Don't forget," he growled, "that everything's off the record." Please don't tell me that story's not true.

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Analysis Insurance



The trouble with
the country
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Writing out a rain cheque

A huge insurance merger yesterday helps to explain why so much junk mail hits your doormat – and why you can buy cover on almost anything, including the certainty of the grave. By **Lisa Buckingham** and **Rupert Jones**

YESTERDAY two of Britain's biggest insurance groups, Commercial Union and General Accident, announced that they would be merging to form a single company worth \$15 billion. The new company, known as CGU, will be Britain's biggest general-insurance company and among the top five life-insurance companies.

This is not the first big recent insurance merger. Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance merged in July 1996 to form Royal & Sun Alliance and a few months later the French insurers AXA and UAP announced their own merger plans. Others have included Royal Liverpool Victoria acquiring the Frizzell Group, Guardian Insurance buying commercial and property parts of Legal & General, and Zurich buying out Eagle Star. Clearly the industry has decided that big is the best way to face the future – in part a response to the growth since the 1980s of the low-overhead, low-cost direct insurers such as Direct Line.

Never has such a huge range of insurance products been on offer. Today the average British household spends more to shield itself against insecurity than ever before. According to the Association of British Insurers, we now part with about £1,800 a year on insurance, whereas a decade or so back we spent less than £500.

Apart from traditional motor insurance and policies for the home, insurers have come up with a plethora of covers designed to capture every spare penny of the nation's growing discretionary spend. Private medical insurance is now big business whereas only a few years back it barely existed. Dental protection has boomed with recent changes to the health service, which have also sparked critical-illness cover, hospital cash plans and long-term-care insurance.

But insurance is no longer simply prepared to confine itself to emergency situations. The underwriters are trying to claim their slice of our pleasure too: take the growth in travel insurance, sports cover, "plinius" policies for when the village fête gets rained off, and even legal-expenses cover to help meet the costs of suing when your insurer has failed to pay up.

The insurance companies are preying on widespread financial vulnerability in this age of uncertainty. The European insurance market is estimated to be worth \$350 billion a year, and has been growing far faster than most economies at 6.8 per cent.

This is why so many of those mailshots on the doormat are being sent by insurers. That new dishwasher... surely you want to ensure that you do not face a hefty bill the moment it goes wrong? To avoid the worry, you can buy insurance to cover the repair bill. Worried about redundancy? What about a policy to cover a few months' repayments on the mortgage, credit card, car or even vets' fees?

Look a little more closely at the mailshots, and you will see that personal insurance is nowadays not so much about providing banking products than anything to do with offering a couple of billion dollars of cover for offshore oil rigs.

"There is a real convergence between banking products and insurance products," Bob Scott, the chief executive of the combined group, explained yesterday. "Some insurance products almost look like bank products."

That, of course, is because they are almost bank products. Think of most life-insurance policies, or the endowment policies which are designed eventually to pay off the cost of a house. They are sold by insurance companies and widely thought of as insurance policies. In reality they are simply savings plans. You pay something each month over a certain period and, instead of being paid interest each month, your savings are topped with bonuses by the insurer after the money has been invested, probably in the stockmarket.

One of the driving factors behind the wave of mergers now sweeping the global financial-services sector is the recognition that banks and insurers are basically in the same business. By joining forces, they can save huge sums of money by closing branches and using one set of employees to run both types of business. This motive was behind the (ultimately aborted) merger talks between NatWest and the Prudential, and has fuelled tie-ups such as that between Abbey National and Scottish Mutual.

Other factors are also shaping this trend. Insurers have been trying to develop their "personal lines" business to offset the rollercoaster results which tend to come from the commercial side of their business. A hurricane, earthquake or air crash can wipe out profits for several years.

This part of their business is traditionally most vulnerable

Your playthings
You can insure all a child's playthings – including their pets. Pet insurance can pay out as much as £2 million for property damage or personal injury and typically up to £1,500 for vet's fees. If your child's dog bites an intruder in your home, some pet insurance policies pay out a cash reward.

Your first car
Young people pay the most for motor insurance: households headed by those under 30 pay on average £389 a year, compared with £217 for over-75s.

Your mortgage
The Government will no longer pay mortgage interest for the first nine months of unemployment. A quarter of mortgaged households now insure against their inability to pay their monthly interest. You might also want personal accident insurance. Households aged 50 to 59 pay the most: £142, on average. But only 6.2 per cent bother to take out a policy.

Your debts
You can insure yourself against debts from credit cards to mortgages. If you cannot work through sickness, accident or unemployment, we spent £2.9 billion on these policies in 1996.

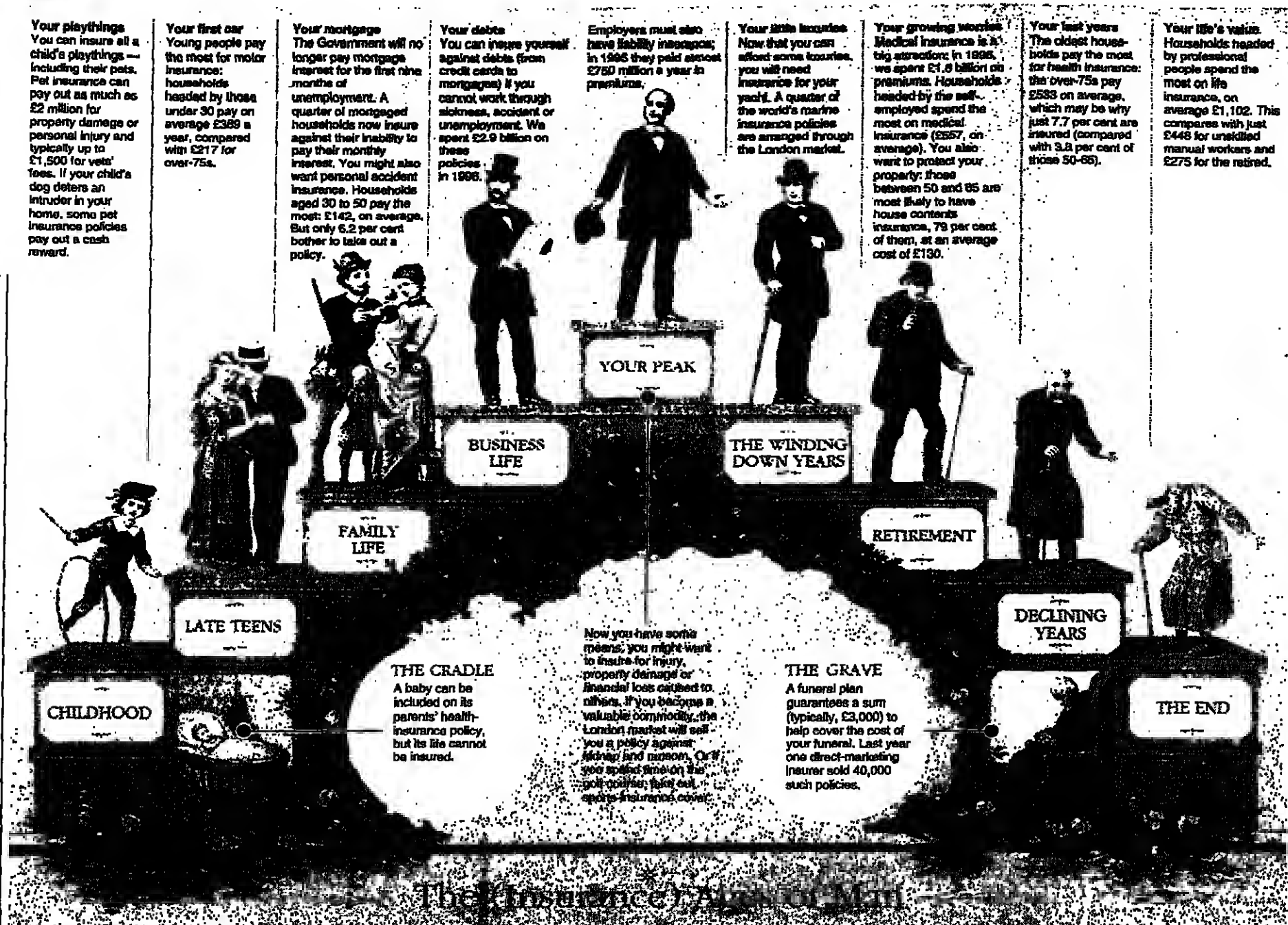
Employers must also
have liability insurance; in 1996 they paid almost £760 million a year in premiums.

Your little teenage
Now that you can afford some leisure, you will need insurance for your yard. A quarter of the world's marine insurance policies are arranged through the London market.

Your growing worries
Medical insurance is a big attraction. In 1996, we spent £1.6 billion on premiums. Households headed by the self-employed spend the most on medical insurance (£257, on average). You also want to protect your property: those between 50 and 59 are most likely to have house contents insurance, 79 per cent of them, at an average cost of £130.

Your last years
The oldest households pay the most for health insurance: the over-75s pay £583 on average, which may be why just 7.7 per cent are insured (compared with 3.8 per cent of those 50-65).

Your life's value
Households headed by professional people spend the most on life insurance, on average £1,102. This compares with just £446 for unskilled manual workers and £275 for the retired.



to the insurance cycle. This is the process by which premium rates rise until they are so high that it becomes economic for new, cheaper companies to enter the market. At this stage, the established companies cut rates to drive out the newcomers. They suffer huge losses in the process. Once they have regained the field, premium rates start to climb once again.

Multi-national customers, such as the oil and pharmaceutical giants, have at the same time been demanding ever-higher layers of cover. This means insurers need deeper pockets – another spur towards mergers. Against this background, some of the traditional business is being taken not only by banks but by new breeds of competitor, from high-street retailers and supermarkets to telephone-sales operators. These direct competitors had the advantage of low costs – and cost-cutting, largely in the form of making employees redundant and streamlining offices and computer systems, is a motive behind mergers.

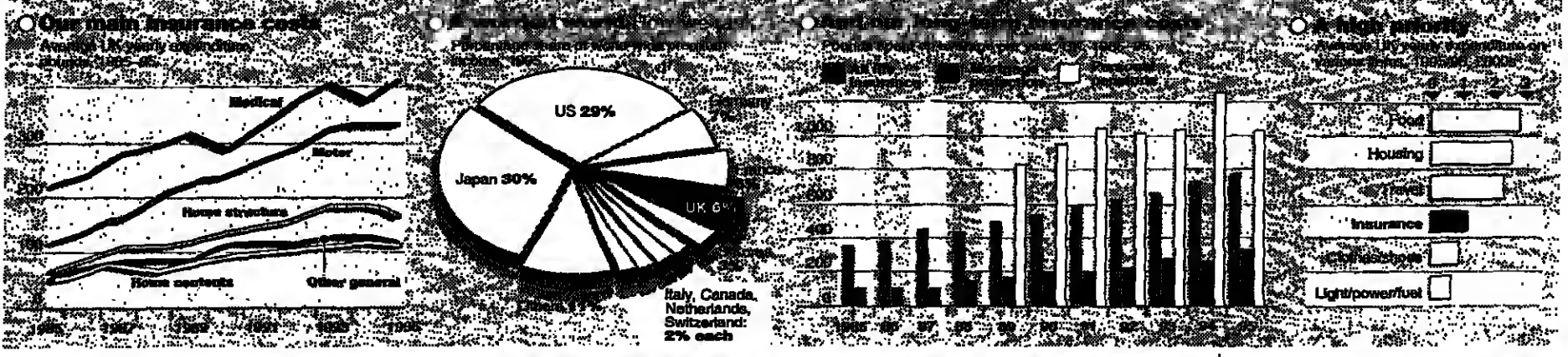
In the short term, big does not necessarily mean more profitable. But insurers have assessed that size will be a long-term winner. And as the big grow even bigger, and try to concentrate on the most lucrative parts of their business portfolios, some worry about further moves towards the creation of a financial underclass. Insurers such as Legal & General have expressed concern that a large slice of the population cannot afford to buy any insurance – yet this group is the most likely to be repeatedly burgled

and the least likely to be able to afford to replace possessions. Campaigning organisations have warned that dangerous gaps are opening at the bottom of the market. Research sponsored by NatWest has identified a quarter of British adults who are denied access to basic financial services (1). The New Policy Institute, a progressive think tank, says poorer areas of the country are turning into financial deserts with some 6 million families without any form of contents insurance. It also

estimates that one car in 20 on the road is uninsured. Far-sighted executives in the industry now think it entirely likely that the Government will demand a quid pro quo for all the new business likely as a result of falling state provision. That could well mean the introduction of compulsory cover along the lines that operate in many North American states. Effectively insurers wanting to dip their fingers into the jam are forced in exchange to accept a little dry bread.

Sources: (1) The Case for Community Development Credit Unions (New Economic Foundation, 1997). **Graphics sources:** Association of British Insurers (Facts, Figures & Trends, September 1997); Statistical Bulletin, June 1997; Sun Life Direct Marketing; Family Expenditure Survey. **Researcher:** Mark Espiner. **Writer:** Lisa Buckingham is the Guardian's city editor, Rupert Jones writes for Jobs and Money.

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FinanceGuardian

Merger mania brings marriage of Commercial Union and General Accident costing 5,000 jobs

Insurers tie £15bn knot

Lisa Buckingham,
City Editor

THE wave of mergers sweeping through Britain's financial sector accelerated yesterday with a blockbusting £15 billion tie-up between insurance groups Commercial Union and General Accident.

The deal will mean the loss of 5,000 jobs, most of which will be in the UK. However, the companies said they expect the bulk of the cuts to come through natural wastage from the £2,000 worldwide workforce.

Savings of more than £225 million a year should flow from the merger which will create a group with about £100 billion of assets under management — one of the largest funds in the country.

Bob Scott, chief executive designate of the new group — to be known as CGU — said that although most of the £15.1 billion of premiums each year are generated by general business, such as property and liability, it is clear the merger has been prompted by both groups' determination to build their life business in the UK.

The group is clearly keen to capture a larger slice of the market for tax-free individual savings accounts and other, formerly state-provided covers, such as long-term care.

Coming in a week which has seen the collapse of merger talks between drugs behemoths SmithKline Beecham and Glaxo because of a spat over boardroom seniority, the insurance companies stressed the harmony among top management.

The companies refused to reveal which of them had made the merger overture but did say talks had taken two months.

Although rumours of the deal surfaced late on Tuesday night, the company said it was confident its security screen had not been breached.

Details of the merger came as CU — which will be the slightly larger partner in the arrangement — announced operating profits of £432 million, compared with £444 million the year before.

Phone deals left old guard unable to fight back

Britain

Teresa Hunter

THE insurance industry scuffed when Direct Line launched the first telephone policy in 1985. Within five years the laughter had stopped — the new boy had become the nation's largest motor insurer.

An assault by the new breed of telephone insurers soon followed and they routed the complacent household names. Supermarkets and other retailers like Marks & Spencer joined in, introducing concepts previously alien to people's experience of insurers.

Simple, easy to understand contracts, were designed to meet customers' not the company's needs; all carried painstaking focus on service.

Their mastery of new technology allowed them to provide cover cheaper than ever before, all at the touch of the telephone. Never before could customers shop around so easily for the best deal.

They delivered an efficient, value for money, 24-hour service seven days a week in a language that the consumer could understand. Cover could be granted at a moment's notice and claims agreed without lengthy form-filling. Buyers of insurance quickly decided they would no longer settle for less.

Traditional insurers, being castigated for scandals involving mortgage endowments and pension mis-selling, were exposed as bureaucratic dinosaurs.



GA's headquarters in Perth should escape drastic job cuts announced by Sir John Carter (left) and Bob Scott (right). PHOTOGRAPHS: MURDO MACLEOD AND SEAN SMITH



ing, were exposed as bureaucratic dinosaurs.

They and their brokers were unable to compete on price or service. Also, huge swathes of their personal lines business, which had been routed through the large building societies, was about to be lost as they transformed themselves into bancassurance groups, establishing their own insurance divisions

to satisfy their enormous pools of customers.

For the first time insurers were forced to disclose the money they made from life, pensions and other investment contracts, exposing the true extent of their advantage. Companies had previously been able to help themselves freely from these funds without disclosing charges.

Sales plummeted when consumers began to appreciate that anything up to the first five years' premiums could be lost in commissions and charges before a penny was invested for them.

Richard Branson's advertising campaign, launching Virgin's financial products, spelled out the raw deal they were being subjected to. Cutting out the middle-man had become a religious crusade.

Cross border temptations grow

Europe

Mark Milner
Deputy Financial Editor

THE merger of Commercial Union and General Accident is more than just a domestic affair. It has a European dimension that runs beyond Commercial Union's extensive French operations and its recent interest in Germany.

On the face of it that might look odd. Although the European Union has had, in theory, a single insurance market since July 1, 1994, a cross border market has been slow to develop.

According to the magazine *Acquisitions Monthly*, few of the 10 biggest acquisitions of European insurance companies have been cross border, due, in part, to government disquiet. The merger of BAT's insurance operations with Zurich Insurance company, and the £6 billion bid for Assurances Générales de France from Germany's Allianz are exceptions to the rule.

Most of the rest have followed the pattern of AXA and UAP in France, Royal Insurance and Sun Life or the Prudential and Scottish Amicable in the UK. Nevertheless a cross border market is developing even if, as Kevin Ryan, at Nikko Europe, acknowledges, "we are at the walking

stage, rather than the running stage".

Most of the big acquisitions are recent. All but one of the 10 biggest have happened within the past 15 months.

Cross border or not, the driving force is the same: cutting costs in an industry increasingly reliant on technology. "You need the same sort of computer development costs and systems whether you are doing £500 million worth of business or £15 billion worth," says Mr Ryan.

The consolidation is not confined within the insurance industry. Swiss insurer Winterthur has merged with the Credit Suisse banking group. Combines like ING

Soccer clubs bet against winning the championship

Fearful of players' bonuses, owners are playing safe, writes Laurie Laird

FOOTBALL fans should sit down before reading further: your favourite club may well be betting against winning the league championship.

Insurance industry sources claim that most of the Premiership's top

teams have taken out policy against topping the table. It's not that club owners don't want the glory that comes with the league title — they just don't want to pay for it. Owners often promise players huge bonuses in the

event of a championship, so, to cover the extra costs, they take out a policy.

Insurance insurers were last night reluctant to reveal which teams carry such a policy, but one said "most of the major teams" are in on the action. Continental teams follow a similar practice, with Italy's Juventus insuring against winning the league.

Professional athletes have long insured against accident or injury that could affect their earning power. Lloyd's has insured boxers, footballers, tennis champions and basketball players. It also insured world land speed record holder Andy Green against injury when he drove his car through the speed of sound last year.

But the proliferation of "unnatural risk" departments at a number of Britain's biggest insurers shows how the insurance industry has diversified in recent years. Food critic Egon Ronay has insured his taste buds for £250,000, while American actress Jamie Lee Curtis has taken out a policy to protect against damage to her legs.

It's not just the rich and famous looking for unorthodox policies: Lloyd's has written policies for individuals covering death or injury from a satellite falling from the sky, and for company managers looking for compensation should two or more employees win the lottery and opt not to return to work.

A Scottish insurance broker recently offered cover against a virgin birth and impregnation or abduction by aliens.

Notebook

Greyish men keep their egos out of it



Edited by
Alex Brummer

GIVEN the recent record of uncomsummated mergers there is clearly room for some scepticism about the £15 billion deal between Commercial Union and General Accident.

Insurance may be different from pharmaceuticals or even banking. The executives who run insurance companies tend, on the whole, to be greyer figures with more restrained egos: this has made the forging of alliances easier.

In the UK, after a little rough and tumble in the boardroom at Royal & Sun Alliance, business appears to have settled. BAT's, by all accounts, satisfactorily injected its Eagle Star asset — management businesses into Switzerland's Zurich, and on the Continent the cross-border Allianz and Assurances Générales of France merger has broken fresh ground. Insurance chiefs look a little better at assessing the risks before going public with their merger proposals.

As with any deal which crosses borders, in this case the divide across Hadrian's Wall, there are going to be political difficulties. But essentially this is a deal as much about Continental Europe and the United States, where both Commercial Union and General Accident have strong franchises, as about the UK.

Clearly, anything through the cost structure — the ambitious aim is to save £225 million a year — will be critical in maintaining competitiveness in the marketplace. Moreover, CU and GA appear to have learnt some of the lessons of recent larger-scale mergers by choosing a moment to come together when there were to be changes at CU anyway.

With the chairman, Nicholas Baring, and chief executive, Sir John Carter, leaving the ring, space has been cleared for GA's chief executive Bob Scott to move into that role in the merged company. CU's recent Swedish capture, Pehr Gyllenhammar, once of Volvo, steps up to become chairman.

Among the reasons this deal might just work is that CU, in particular, has a record of making its overseas interests count, bringing back the North American business from the brink of disaster and forging some good alliances across Europe as far east as Poland.

The little bit of icing in all of this is a £100 billion asset fund management business for the new CGU, which will put it up there with the Pru, Schroders and MAM. Who knows, CGU may soon go scouting European mandates from under the noses of its more recognised competitors? It will be an interesting contest.

Standard shines

THE gong for the star performance among UK banks in 1997 must go to Standard Chartered which appears, for the time being at least, to have weathered the Asian storms well, despite the stock market's worst years.

Given Standard Chartered's history of banana skins, a degree of concern was always likely. But it does seem that the current management team of Patrick Gillam and Malcolm Williamson has done a great deal to improve controls and the quality of the loan book, even if they are not entirely at one over a merger with Barclays.

With one leap the 1997 results have pushed the share price up 16.7 per cent in a day's trading, which is exactly where it was before Hong Kong faced potential meltdown in autumn.

The surge in the share price is partly based on the takeover hopes (although Standard Chartered may be one of the most expensive routes into emerging markets) but more on a robust performance. Profits before provisions, reached a £1.1 billion for the first time, though this was knocked back to £904 million by £156 million of bad debt set asides, up £100 million on the previous year.

Beyond the provisions, Standard Chartered recognises that the Asian crisis is by no means over, with Indonesia still battling with the IMF. It estimates that it will be at least two years before past levels of growth and business are restored. The key for Standard Chartered is plainly going to be China and Hong Kong if there were to be a Beijing devaluation, or another assault on the Hong Kong dollar leading to panic conditions in the market, then its current loan book might look a great deal more vulnerable.

Good Morrow

THE disappearance of Hambros, once among the top rank of the City's houses, into the bowels of Société Générale of France after 160 years passed barely noticed among the tectonic movements under way in global finance. But the change of ownership has brought an abrupt end to one of the longest and most varied careers in merchant banking.

Sir Ian Morrow, Hambros director and veteran of such landmark battles as that to save first Kenwood, and then Rolls-Royce in 1971, and the person who did as much as Lord Hollick to create the MAI money-broking to United News & Media has been evicted from his Tower Hill office at the tender age of 65.

Perhaps Société Générale should take a few protocol lessons from SBC Warburg Dean Witter, which still boasts the distinguished economist Lord Roll — now 90 years old — among its senior executives.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.42	Germany 2.8850	Malaysia 6.26	Singapore 2.84
Austria 20.30	Greece 458.67	Malta 0.63	South Africa 2.50
Belgium 59.46	Hong Kong 12.43	Netherlands 3.2400	Spain 24.39
Canada 2.29	India 64.82	New Zealand 2.78	Sweden 12.82
Cyprus 0.8485	Ireland 1.1598	Norway 12.06	Switzerland 2.33
Denmark 11.06	Israel 5.91	Portugal 295.36	Turkey 361.870
Finland 8.84	Italy 2.869	Saudi Arabia 6.08	USA 1.5149
France 9.658			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shahel and indollar)

Golf

Spaniards back in the swing

David Davies in Dubai on the significance of the Desert Classic to two drought-hit players

THE temptation to shed a tear had to be resisted. "It could not help me to win this week," said Jose Maria Olazabal, "so I put it away from me."

It was one year ago, in the Gulf city-state of Dubai, that the Spaniard made an emotional return to competitive golf after a misdiagnosis had kept him almost literally out on his feet and out of all golf for 18 months.

His first tournament back was the Desert Classic. He had suffered agonies for a year and a half after American doctors told him he had rheumatoid arthritis, when the real problem lay in his lower back.

He chose Dubai for his return, partly because it was a big tournament and he was welcomed back to the fold like the long lost son that he was. Greg Norman and Ian Woosnam, signing him on the putting green, went over and emptied their pockets on account of his not having won any money for such a long time; an action which reduced all three to helpless laughter. Olazabal's hand was shaken so firmly and so frequently that he began to fear it might affect his grip.

It was the memory of those warm, warm welcomes which helped him pause while packing this time. But, realist that he is, those memories no longer serve. Last year he had a third-round 65, finished 12th and won more than £10,500 but he will not be satisfied with a repeat this week. "I want to be in contention," he said.

The achievement last year of which Olazabal is most proud was playing Ryder Cup golf again. His partner of past years, Severiano Ballesteros, was non-playing captain; Olazabal admits he is "sad to see him in his situation", and Ballesteros himself is opening his season here this week, uncertain whether he will enjoy it. "In some ways," Ballesteros

said, "I am in a very easy situation. If I play well, that is great. But if not..." and the most expressive shoulders in golf shrugged. "I am speaking with my heart now. I have won 50 tournaments around the world and I have won five majors. I have a great family and I am in good health. I have nothing to prove to anyone. I am very lucky and I am grateful."

"You know, there are losing people and there are winning people... and I am on the winning side."

Certainly that is how golf will remember Seve: as a winner, even though people tend now to talk about him in the past tense. Ernie Els, also in Dubai, said yesterday: "He used to be like Tiger [Woods] is now, a fighter and always the favourite. When he was playing well, he used to stride out... he was a great sight."

Even Ballesteros would have to admit that he is not an event with the likes of Norman, Colin Montgomerie, Woosnam, Lee Westwood and Thomas Bjorn competing, and this will probably be a week when the 40-year-old Spaniard has to settle for a struggle.

Ominously, perhaps, his arrival was not without mishap: when he opened his suitcase he had lost 12 shirts and five pairs of trousers. "They left something for me, so they must be a good person."

Restocking his wardrobe with the help of a sponsor was easy; restoring his game may prove harder.



Olazabal... first anniversary



All change... Ballesteros sports a new look in yesterday's pro-am

SPORTS NEWS 13

Racing

Judge tells jury to treat evidence with caution

Tony Poley

THE jury in the libel action between The Sporting Life and trainer Lynda Ramsden and her husband Jack and champion jockey Kieren Fallon will return to the High Court this morning to consider its verdict after having been warned by the judge to treat the evidence of crucial witness Derek Thompson "with caution."

In his summing up yesterday, Mr Justice Morland told the seven men and five women that the Channel 4 presenter's evidence was against Fallon alone because the Ramsdens were not present at the time.

Thompson had alleged that Fallon confided to him in a pub on the night of the 1995 Swaffham Handicap at Newmarket that Mr Ramsden had told him to pull Tony Coes in the race.

"You must treat the evidence of Derek Thompson with caution. Only after very careful consideration should you act on his evidence."

"You have to be satisfied that his account of the conversation is truthful and accurate and that what he said Fallon said amounted to a confession," he said.

He reminded the jury that Thompson, who was subpoenaed by The Sporting Life, had earlier given the defence the "gist" of his

evidence which was inconsistent with what he said in court.

In that document, Thompson claimed that Fallon said Mr Ramsden told him: "We have missed the price. Today is not the day."

The judge commented: "You may feel the inconsistency throws serious doubt on the reliability of his evidence of what was supposed to have been said."

The jury have spent 18 days listening to details of a "verbal onslaught" on the trio after Tony Coes' victory in the 1995 Chester Cup.

They were accused of cheating by conspiring to deceive the racing public by deliberately not trying to win the Swaffham three weeks before.

Publishers Mirror Group Newspapers deny libel. They say the article is justified and a fair comment on a "scandal" that was matter of public interest.

Tickets for the Tattersalls enclosure on Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup day, Thursday March 19, have sold out. Cheltenham racecourse announced yesterday.

"We would recommend to anybody wanting tickets for the Courage Enclosure on Thursday to book as soon as possible," said Cheltenham managing director Edward Gillespie.

Wincanton Jackpot card

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 Mandy's Mission (jap)	Mandy's Mission
2.30 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
3.10 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
3.40 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
4.15 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
4.50 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
5.20 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission

2.05 GEORGE NEWELL MARE HANDICAP CHASE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

2.35 JIM FORD CHALLENGE CUP CHASE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

3.10 AXMINSTER 100 KINGSWELL HURDLE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

3.40 LADDERBROOK HANDICAP CHASE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

4.15 MERIE MAIDEN HURDLE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

4.50 LINCHESTER HANDICAP HURDLE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

Trainer watch

Wincanton: 2.05 Mandy's Mission (jap) to Mandy's Mission. 2.30 Mandy's Mission (jap) to Mandy's Mission. 3.10 Mandy's Mission (jap) to Mandy's Mission. 3.40 Mandy's Mission (jap) to Mandy's Mission. 4.15 Mandy's Mission (jap) to Mandy's Mission. 4.50 Mandy's Mission (jap) to Mandy's Mission.

5.20 GOLF COURSE STANDARD NATIONAL FLAT RACE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

1.45 SAWTRY FEN NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

2.50 CHATTERBOX FEN NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

3.25 LONGWOOD FEN HANDICAP CHASE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

4.00 MIDLEY FEN MAIDEN HURDLE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

4.30 BUCKINGHAM FEN HANDICAP CHASE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

5.00 WIMBORNE FEN HANDICAP CHASE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

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Huntingdon runners and riders

TONY PALEY	TOP FORM
2.05 Mandy's Mission (jap)	Mandy's Mission
2.30 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
3.10 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
3.40 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
4.15 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
4.50 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission
5.20 Mandy's Mission	Mandy's Mission

2.15 HORSELEY FEN HANDICAP CHASE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
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2.50 CHATTERBOX FEN NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
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1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)	11500 Mandy's Mission (jap)

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Cricket of utter grandeur a striking feature of Bourda between the disruptive rule of weather and politics



Frank Keating

THE next few days on the Caribbean's South American mainland promise something special, not least because a Test match at Guyana's historic Bourda ground is a rarity in

itself, especially so in a drought. If important Georgetown cricket down the century has been regularly ruined or washed out by the rains, there have also been extraneous reasons for postponing the "No Play Today". For instance, England never played a Test there in the 1980s; on their 1980-81 tour Guyana's President Forbes Burnham threw out the tourists when Robin Jackman, direct from coaching in South Africa, joined the team; and, in for all, on the 1985-86 trip Lord's excluded Guyana from the itinerary. Weather and politics permitting, though, Bourda has

staged cricket of utter grandeur. In this very week in 1930, on England's first official tour, the 20-year-old George Headley, grandfather of the present England bowler Dean, announced himself with 114 and 112 against an attack led by Bill Voce and Wilfred Rhodes. Thirty years ago another legendary "one-man" Test was played at Bourda by Garfield Sobers when, after to all intents handling Colin Cowdrey's England the series with a zanyly generous declaration in the previous Test at Port of Spain, he beguilingly attempted to make amends by taking on England on his own, scoring a chanceless 152 and

85 not out, and returning bowling figures (fast, slow, medium and wrist-spin) of 88-31-125-6. Only famous last-wicket defiance by Alan Knott and Jeff Jones (serenading each other with "There'll be a welcome in the hillsides") between each delivery of the final over) denied the smiling Sobers victory. By a calendar fluke, this very Bourda Test match day (February 27) is the anniversary of Ian Botham's 1981 England team bus — Jackman perkyly defiant in the front seat — being escorted by a team of military out-riders to Georgetown airport and put on a plane for Barbados. The team had been kicking

their heels for a week as the rains came down. A few years later, writing a book with Graham Gooch, I realised the ironic double whammy of those days at the Pegasus Hotel. For, out of the blue, the team's star opening batsman, Geoffrey Boycott had called a secret meeting. It was attended by captain Botham, Gooch, David Gower, John Emburey, and Graham Dilley, and Boycott furtively announced (Baldric-like) his plan. He showed them a sheaf of cables outlining the proposition from an agent of the South African Cricket Board, Peter Cooke, and the prospective sponsor Holiday Inns SA Ltd, for a "rebel" tour of the

benighted republic 12 months hence. And so, precisely, did it come to pass, Boycott clandestinely organising the team and Gooch capitulating it; Emburey also went. The others, Botham, Gower and Dilley, each said "Thanks, but no thanks" to Boycott and the South Africans. Had Burnham (and we) but known it at the time, the then president's reaction to the arrival in Guyana of Jackman that day was a warning shot across the bows. **T**HE day before, February 26, Jackman had been served with his "revocation of two-week work permit" on return-

ing with his new England colleagues from a one-day game at Berbice. When the Chinese whispers, suggesting the president was displeased, had begun that breakfast-time, those of us in the accompanying Fleet Street caravan had drawn lots as to which would cover the cricket or stay in the capital awaiting developments alongside the England manager A C Smith and British High Commissioner, Philip Mallet CMG (Winchester & Balliol). We traipsed down Main Street in straggly, fly-swatted style to the British compound. The Union Jack was listless at the mast. Behind shutters in his colo-

rial mansion, HM representative sat in a faded white Aquascutum suit under Annigoni's portrait of his Queen, remains of the morning boiled egg on his tie, the Northampton shoes shiny black. He motioned us to sit. "Whitethill are due to call," he said, brimming with anticipation. When the telephone rang, Mallet wiped his brow, and lifted the receiver. "Hello, yes... He was all of a quake. But it was only his second secretary, in Berbice. Mallet slammed the phone down, annoyed: "Boycott's out for seven if anyone's interested." We weren't. For a day we were in the front-page foreign correspondents.

Cricket West Indies v England: fourth Test

Fifty not out by captain Atherton

Mike Selvey in Georgetown leads the applause for an imminent England milestone

GIVEN that he occupies a position that he never actively craved, and which at times has had its controversies, Mike Atherton's tenure of the England captaincy has been remarkable. Against the Australians last summer he steamed past Peter May's record, and when the fourth Test begins at Bourda here in Guyana tomorrow he will captain England for the 50th time, equalling Viv Richards' number for West Indies.

Only Allan Border, whose leadership of Australia ran to 93 matches, and Clive Lloyd, who captained West Indies 74 times and is now the manager, have led their teams more often and both are probably out of reach. It has been a long 44 years since Graham Gooch's sad resignation after the defeat by Australia at Headingley and the appointment a week later of a wary 25-year-old Atherton for the last two matches of that series.

More than once his reign might have ended. The celebrated dirt-in-the-pocket incident during the match against South Africa at Lord's would have done for many captains. "When I took the job I was a young man with little experience," he said, "so my reaction to all that was maybe not how I would respond then, typically, was not to fold as some might have done but instead to guts his way to runs in the next Test. It was Atherton almost getting his kicks from taking things to the very edge, as he has done many times: there were his runs in Christchurch last winter to win a match upon which his survival probably depended, runs in the memorable rearguard action in Johannesburg, and more runs in the third Test in Trinidad last week to help set up a win that kept this series very much alive.

Like his predecessor, Atherton's batting average as captain — 3.601 runs at 42.8 — exceeds his overall average, which has just slipped below 40, though a part of that will be a function of his maturing as a player. His captaincy record of 13 wins, 17 defeats and 19 draws is by his own admission modest, but he has won more than a brace at The Oval against Australia and one in Bridgetown four years ago — came when England had already lost the series. "It is a mixed record," he admitted, "but to be fair it reflects the England team not just under my captaincy but over a longer period. To have

struggled against Australia for a decade and strived against West Indies for longer than that is not just peculiar to my captaincy period, it is a reflection on the quality of the domestic cricket we play. "I have to say we are improving dramatically in that respect and, although I may have a one-eyed blinkered view, I believe the England team is getting stronger as a result."

The next few weeks will decide whether Atherton's captaincy continues next summer. Win and the job could be his as long as he wants it, lose and he knows the consequences. He came within a whisker of resigning before the final Test last summer and only that euphoric win and some hard talking from those whose opinion he respects persuaded him to continue.

"I'm glad now that I didn't throw it away," he said, "because I am enjoying this tour thoroughly. I like Caribbean tours anyway but I enjoy the bunch of players I am with, and I am enjoying the way we are playing cricket." Should the worst happen and England lose the series, he will almost certainly be gone. But the desire to bat for England remains. "I'm 29 going on 30 now and, although I'm not going to do a Gooch and be playing when I'm 41, I think I've got two or three years left as an international batsman."

Atherton harbours few regrets. Lack of success against the top teams, particularly Australia, rankles; so too the dreadful World Cup in India and Pakistan when for the only time he felt the team really underperformed under his leadership, although he wryly admits that he did not feel that the preparation for a prestigious tournament was the best. Perhaps his biggest regret emerged when he pointed out that on this tour he has nine of the players who were with him four years ago on his first tour here as captain, and that since then he has led almost 50 different players on to the field. "Have you ever wondered what might have happened if he had been able to stick with the same nucleus of players?" he was asked. "Often, mate," he replied with a raising of the eyebrows, "often."

Carl Hooper has been reported to the West Indies Cricket Board and may face disciplinary action for refusing to play for Guyana against England. Hooper, West Indies' vice-captain, is in the squad for the fourth Test.



Straight bat... Mike Atherton displays his customary concentration during yesterday's England out LAURENCE GRIFFITHS

South Africa v Pakistan: second Test

Cronje warning after 'panic' attack

PAKISTAN have claimed the psychological high ground over South Africa before today's second Test at Kingsmead, which takes some cheek after the chase in Johannesburg last week when the first Test began late because of the alleged mugging of two of the tour party. But Amir Sohail, Pakistan's acting captain, makes some sense when he reasons that the South Africans are on the run. "We have them on the back foot," he said. "They are panicking. Look at the

changes they have made after just one game." South Africa, alone among the leading Test-playing countries, do not possess one batsman averaging more than 40 in Tests. They have disguised this deficiency with plenty of late-order runs, strong fast bowling, aggressive fielding and an indomitable spirit, but realise Pakistan have quality bowlers who can sweep away their middle order. After one drawn Test and one innings each in the series, Daryll Cullinan and Herschelle Gibbs have been dropped, and the captain Hansie Cronje warned yesterday that the players

must overcome their "90-for-five syndrome". "This has cost two players their places," he said, "and the selectors are going to be more strict in making sure this doesn't happen. Players will have to take responsibility or the personnel will be changed." All six batsmen in South Africa's squad of 13 will play today. Hython Ackerman, son of the former Northamptonshire batsman of the same name, will win his first cap, and Cronje, returning after a knee operation, will bat at No. 6. With Allan Donald, Shaun Pollock and Lance Klusener certain of their places,

together with the wicket-keeper Mark Boucher, and the left-arm spinner Paul Adams unlikely to play because of Kingsmead's reputation for pace and bounce, the final place will be between the off-spinner Pat Symcox and the swing bowler Fanie de Villiers. Pakistan may be unchanged as their captain-wicketkeeper Rashid Latif is still unfit, and the fast bowler Mohammad Akram is short of preparation. However, they are likely to play both their spinners, Saqlain Mushtaq and Mustaq Ahmed. Sohail said: "I think it will turn from the third day."

Tennis

Richardson struts his stuff

Stephen Bierley

ANDREW Richardson, Britain's No. 3, is not a man to get unduly excited whether he wins or loses. "Professional tennis is all about taking your opportunities, and I took my chance," he said yesterday after Switzerland's Marc Rosset retired in the second set of their first-round match of the indoor Guardian Direct Cup at Battersea Park.

While Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman tread the boards from week to week on the world's leading stages, Richardson plays the equivalent of provincial repertory, hoping that eventually, by dint of hard work and luck, he will move up from satellite and challenger tournaments to the full ATP Tour.

To do this he must reach the top 100, and he will edge closer from his current No. 145 after this win over Rosset, ranked No. 28. Rosset complained afterwards of feeling "faint". There might be some reason to suppose he had overdone on British left-handers, having been beaten in the final of the European Community Championship in Antwerp last Sunday by Rusedski.

Richardson took a set off Rosset in Tokyo last year and was clearly confident, moving well and serving well. Rosset by contrast appeared less than interested. Over the past few weeks the Swiss has reached two ATP finals and one semi-final, and he clearly needs a rest. This is the madness of the ATP Tour, but it is not to take anything away from Richardson, who could do

nothing more than play his best and push Rosset hard, which is precisely what he did. He broke Rosset for a 5-8 first-set lead, and clinched it on the fifth set point. He then broke Rosset's serve for a second time and the former Olympic champion called it an afternoon. "My current ranking is a fair reflection of my play but sometimes I perform much worse," said Richardson, who will be 24 next month. "It's a mental barrier more than anything. Tim Henman tread the boards from week to week on the world's leading stages, Richardson plays the equivalent of provincial repertory, hoping that eventually, by dint of hard work and luck, he will move up from satellite and challenger tournaments to the full ATP Tour."

Tell that to Rosset or Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic, the No. 8 seed, who lost 6-2, 6-4 to South Africa's Wayne Ferreira in a second-round match lasting a little over an hour. It was all a far cry from Tim Henman's marathon opening against Holland's Richard Krajicek which ended in the small hours of yesterday morning, the British No. 2 winning 6-7, 7-6, 7-5. Henman's relief was tangible, for previously he had lost four successive first-round matches. With Krajicek leading 7-6, 5-3 it appeared he was about to gain revenge for losing his Wimbledon title in the fourth round against Henman last summer. But Henman augmented his considerable application and hard work with that other vital ingredient: luck. And then the confidence surged back. He plays Rainer Schuttler tonight for a place in the quarter-finals. The 21-year-old German, ranked 118, was a qualifier for this tournament but beat Henman recently in Split.

Sailing

Affront for near finishers as the weather takes a hand

Bob Fisher in San Sebastiao

AFRONT has effectively built a barricade for those attempting to finish the fifth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race. Progress for all has been reduced as they beat to windward and it has added a day to the ETA. EF Language arrived just in time on Monday but Bristol Sunergy still had 228 nautical miles to go at 18:00 GMT yesterday, six hours after she was expected to reach here. Roy Heiner, her skipper, has been able to maintain his

12-mile lead over Dee Smith's Chesapeake, and with the wind veering, his strategy of staying to the west should pay when both boats tack towards this Brazilian port. They have 85 miles in hand on Swedish March and Merit Cup, the boats scrapping for fourth with Toshiba. The all-women crew in EF Education finally arrived in the Argentinian port of Ushuaia to step a new mast. They began motoring at Isles Evout to conform with regulations. "We will return to that spot and continue racing to San Sebastiao," said the navigator Lynnaeth Beckley.

Rugby Union

Exposed Jenkins refuses to fill Wales full-back role again

Paul Rice

AFTER being given the runaround at Twickenham last Saturday, Neil Jenkins has told Wales he has played his last game at full-back. The 26-year-old Pontypridd outside-half found himself the last lie of an increasingly bedraggled defence against rampaging England and was exposed as a player out of position. Jenkins played at full-back for the Lions in South Africa last summer and his consum-

mate place-kicking contributing significantly to the tourists' series success, but he said then that he felt uncomfortable in the position and on his return to Wales asked to be considered only as an outside-half. He was given that role against Tonga and New Zealand last autumn but this month was switched back to full-back for the international against Italy and England. "I am not a full-back," said Jenkins, who has scored a record 571 points for Wales and is set to join Bath next season.

"I do not like playing there and my discomfort showed against England. I told Kevin Bowring (the Wales coach) that I will never play there again because it is not fair to me or to the team. I never want to go through the experience of Saturday again."

"I am an outside-half by nature as well as by preference and if Kevin does not consider I am good enough to play for Wales there I will accept that. I am confident of doing myself justice in my proper position but not at full-back and Kevin understands that."

Wales were today due to announce their team to play Scotland at Wembley on Saturday week but it has been delayed until Tuesday because of injury worries including the captain Robert Howley, who has had a scan for knee damage and will miss Cardiff's Wales Cup tie at Ebbw Vale on Saturday. Former internationals have called for Bowring to resign but Geoff Evans, chairman of the WRU's technical committee which oversees the national squad, said the coach's position is secure.

Sport in brief

Rugby League

St Helens have been granted a work permit for Damiano Smith, the Australian centre signed last month after being "cut" by Sydney St George for disciplinary reasons, writes Andy Wilson. But the Queenslanders is ineligible for Sunday's Challenge Cup fifth-round tie at home to Warrington, who will be without the former Saints prop Adam Fogarty after a recurrence of his thigh strain.

Cricket

India have recalled Ramesh Chauhan, the off-spinner stood down recently while his

controversial action was referred to the International Cricket Council, in a 14-man squad for the first of three Tests against Australia starting in Madras on March 6. India, unbeaten in a home series since 1987, have also named the slow left-arm Venkatesh Raju, the leg-spinner Anil Kumble and the slow-bowling all-rounder Hirshikesh Kanitkar.

Hockey

Russell Garcia will become England's most capped player today with his 107th international — his 228th when Great Britain appearances are included — against Malaysia in Ipoh, a warm-up for the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup which starts on Saturday.

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SportsGuardian

FA Cup

Fifth-round replay: Barnsley 3, Manchester United 2

Jones boy sends United packing

Michael Walker

IT WAS not a time to be sniffling lines and Barnsley performed their near to perfection at an overjoyed though extremely nervous Oakwell last night. John Hendrie's ninth-minute strike gave Barnsley the start they wanted but it was the relatively unknown 22-year-old Scott Jones who collected the bouquets with two goals, one in each half.

But there were plenty of sticky moments for Barnsley too. In between Jones's

goals, Teddy Sheringham pulled one back and eight minutes from the end Andy Cole drove in Manchester United's second. Barnsley, though, held on for over six minutes into second-half injury-time and now face Newcastle United at St James's Park in the quarter-finals.

The last time United had graced Oakwell, 24 years ago, Denis Law, Bobby Charlton and George Best all played, so United's 1998 version was inevitably going to suffer by comparison. Nevertheless, even by today's standards, the side fielded by Alex Ferguson

had a peculiar look in personnel and formation. Injuries to Paul Scholes, Ryan Giggs and Nicky Butt all played their part, but Sheringham and Denis Irwin starting on the bench perhaps gave an indication of where this competition lies in United's list of priorities.

Yet even with the likes of Michael Clegg and Erik Nevland turning out, together with David May for the first time since October, United started out odds-on to win. Barnsley merely started out as you would expect — with enthusiasm.

Although without four

players from the 1-1 draw at Old Trafford, the heart of the Barnsley team Neil Redfearn still pumped strongly and twice in the opening five minutes he threatened Peter Schmeichel's goal.

But in the ninth minute Hendrie took it a stage further. Collecting Darren Barnard's incisive short pass in the inside-left channel, he carried the ball only a couple of yards before striking an outrageous scooped shot with the toe of his right foot that flew into the net over Schmeichel.

It was a goal with comic-book origins and was also contentious, with Hendrie

looking offside when he picked up the ball. But the goal stood, and perhaps carried some poetic justice after the referee Mike Riley's penalty-decision error against Barnsley from the first game.

United were so annoyed that Gary Neville was booked but by the 20th minute they had stabilised to the degree that David Beckham had struck a post and David Watson had been unable to hold a powerful drive from Andy Cole.

However prior to Hendrie's goal Nevland had wasted an even better chance, running on to

Beckham's exquisite 50-yard pass only to lob the ball wide when it looked easier to score.

Young Nevland's confidence deflated after that and he was replaced by Sheringham in the 34th minute. But the England international had little opportunity to impose himself before Barnsley went two up in first-half injury-time.

This time United could only blame themselves for poor defending at Redfearn's inswinging free-kick from the left. It cleared a couple of white United shirts, Schmeichel

was unconvincing as he

came for the ball and Jones, appearing in only his second game in almost a year, sped into the resulting gap to stretch out his right leg and toe-end the ball over the line.

It was an undeserved margin at that stage, given United's attacking contribution, and that resumed after the interval with Cole twice going close, first with a header and then with a low shot that slid inches wide.

With Irwin on for McClair, United began to create room along the left and 11 minutes into the second half a Beckham

surge into space brought a drilled cross. Sheringham was waiting on the end of it, and with a swivel, a shot and a deflection United were back in the contest.

Within nine minutes, however, the game swung Barnsley's way again when Jones, unmarked, charged on to Redfearn's corner to send a powerful header crashing in off the crossbar.

Barnsley (3-5-2): Watson; Markie, Moore, Jones. Appley, Bosancic, Redfern, Barnard, Bullock, Marcora, Timmer, Hendrie (40th), May, Ward. Manchester United (4-4-2): Schmeichel, Clegg (24th), May, Pallister, G. Neville, P. Neville, McClair, Irwin, 48th, Beckham, Thornley, Nevland (Sheringham, 34th), Cole. Referee: M. Riley (Leeds)

Fifth-round replay
 Crystal Palace 1, Arsenal 2

Anelka and Bergkamp prime the Gunners

David Laeey

ONLY missing players and missed chances disturbed the serenity of Arsenal's progress towards the last eight of the FA Cup last night.

Having forced a scoreless draw at Highbury through solid defending, Crystal Palace melted away at Selhurst Park, conceding a goal in the first minute and another after Dean Gordon was sent off.

Bruce Dyer's goal restored life to the contest but after Marc Overmars had replaced the ill-stricken Dennis Bergkamp Arsenal should have put the game well beyond Palace's reach.

An air of impermanence hung over Palace. The club are changing hands and in due course will change their manager. Unless Premier League results improve, moreover, they will soon change their status once more.

Compared with yesterday's momentous events at Selhurst the FA Cup was almost an incidental — a far cry from 1990 and that close-run thing with Manchester United at Wembley. Then Palace owed much to the astute management of Steve Coppell, now facing another move upstairs.

For Arsenal a place in the Champions' League, albeit as runners-up rather than champions, remains the prime aim. Yet a home quarter-final in the Cup was surely not to be sneezed at, even by an Arsenal side missing more than half of their regular players.

Palace it was, in fact, who caught an early-evening chill. Arsenal might have been without Ray Parlour and Emmanuel Petit but with Bergkamp starting the game they still had the means to split their opponents' defence.

The match was barely a minute old when the Dutchman caught Palace square and spreadeagled with one of his precise legs from midfield. Hermann Hreidarsson's attempt at an interception merely helped the ball on to Nicolas Anelka, who scooped the ball beyond the advancing Kevin Miller and touched it into the net after his first shot had struck the inside of a post and bobbed along the goal line.

The previous three encounters between these sides, in league and Cup, had produced only one goal — Gilles Grimandi's winner for Arsenal at

Highbury on Saturday — in 4½ hours of football, so here at last was the season of a mould having been broken.

Not that Palace, who score goals as readily as men threading needles in the dark, took much encouragement from this. Their attack struggled to find rhythm and there was little support for Dyer and Tomas Broin.

On the quarter-hour a 35-yard shot from Lee Dixon dipped over Miller's head and clipped the top of the crossbar. Five minutes later Dixon's pass sent Luis Boa Morte clear and although Miller managed to smother the ball before he could shoot, a second Arsenal goal was not far away.

It followed the dismissal of Gordon in the 26th minute for bringing down Anelka, who had been left with a clear run for goal by Boa Morte's pass. Bergkamp's free-kick took a wicked deflection off Marc Edworthy and completely wrong-footed Miller.

That seemed to be that. Crystal Palace, however, now discovered the powers of concentration associated with condemned men and managed to keep the contest alive with a goal 10 minutes before half-time.

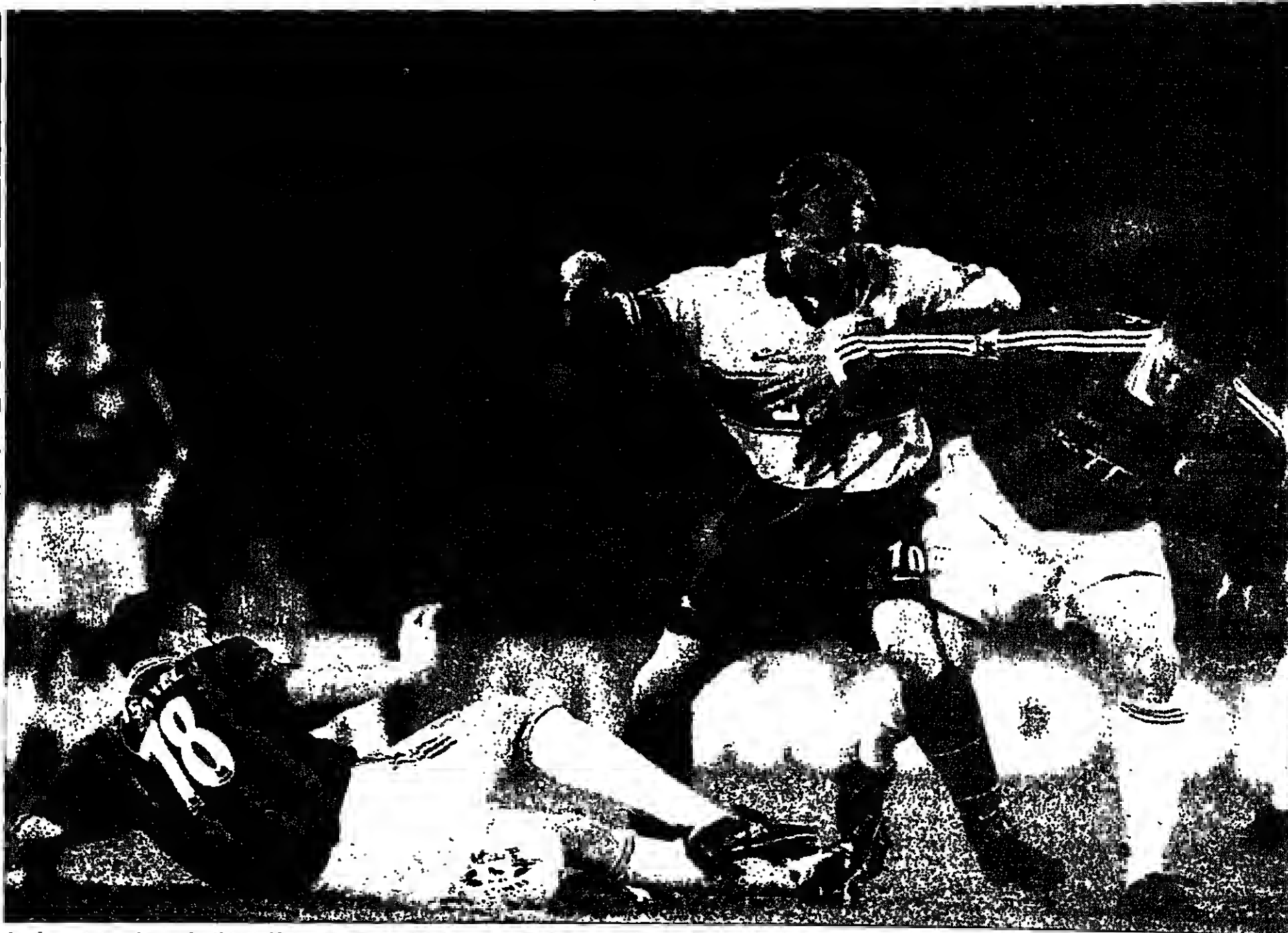
Manminger, who had done well to push wide a shot from Dyer, blocked Hreidarsson's header after Simon Rodger's corner but Dyer glanced in the rebound, quite a boost to the morale of a team that had not won a home league game all season and were reduced to 10 men on the night.

Not surprisingly Arsène Wenger's players set out to relax the tempo for the second half, concentrating on a possession game which would exploit their advantage of an extra man.

Palace defended more tightly but with Broin withdrawing to midfield Dyer was now their only out-and-out striker. He alone was unlikely to disturb the authority of Tony Adams and Martin Keown, yet an inspired pass from Broin might so easily have produced a second goal for Palace two minutes past the hour.

The Swede's finely-angled ball from the right caught Keown pushing up a fraction too late to spring the offside trap and Dyer was clear, but he failed to beat the advancing Manminger.

Crystal Palace (4-2-2): Miller, Edworthy, Hreidarsson, Rodger, Dyer, Broin. Arsenal (3-4-3): Manminger, Keown, Adams, Overmars, Owen, Platt, Vieira, Hughes, Bergkamp, Anelka, Boa Morte. Referee: M. Bodenham (Farnham)



Dutch courage... Dennis Bergkamp rides Crystal Palace tackles by Andy Roberts and the grounded Valerien Ismael in Arsenal's FA Cup fifth-round replay at Selhurst Park. STU FORSTER

Goldberg gets Palace and goes after Terry Venables

Martin Thorpe

THE Palace revolution finally took place yesterday, paving the way for the enthronement of Terry Venables as manager and a planned transformation of the struggling south London club into a major Premiership power within five years.

After months of talks Mark Goldberg, a 34-year-old self-made computer millionaire, signed a deal with Ron Noddes at 3am yesterday in which the chairman agreed to sell his controlling interest to the lifelong Palace fan for £30 million.

One of Goldberg's first tasks as kingmaker was to persuade the current manager Steve Coppell to step down, once a replacement is found, and take the post of director of football in charge of development.

"My aim is to bring Terry

Venables in as manager," said Goldberg yesterday. "I will meet with him early next week when he returns from abroad to see if he is interested."

Goldberg wants Palace "competing in Europe within five years". They are currently one off the bottom of the Premiership.

In the meantime he has moved to strengthen the side by agreeing terms to sign Aston Villa's midfielder Sasa Curcic for £1 million.

In his five-year plan, Goldberg wants to see Selhurst Park redeveloped into a 40,000-capacity stadium with training, management and medical facilities transformed.

This will be driven by a unique link-up with Juventus, who are taking a 10 per cent stake in Palace. One of the Serie A club's executives will move permanently to the London club.

In return Palace could sign

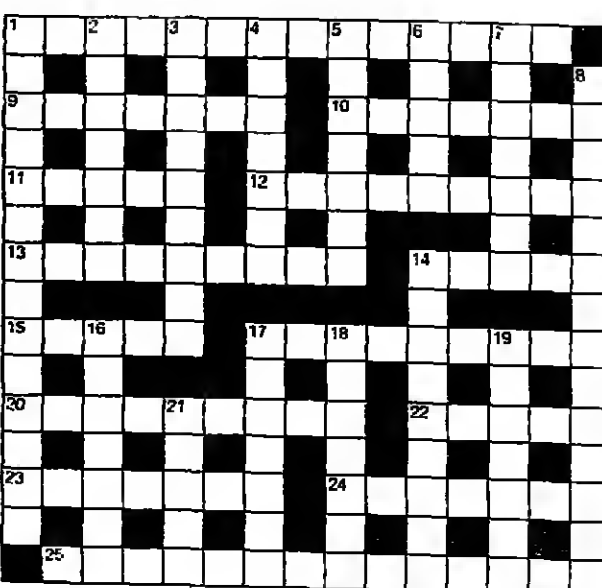
Juventus players on loan and will receive immense technical help.

Coppell's job will be to implement the Juventus model throughout Selhurst Park. "We can benefit from their tactical planning, latest technology in sports medicine and the way they monitor players' fitness and performance," said Goldberg. "We need to implement them if we are to take Palace into the new era of football."

Under the deal with Noddes, Goldberg has paid a deposit of £10 million with the remaining £20 million to be paid on completion in October to secure 50 per cent of the shares. Noddes will continue as chairman until at least October but cannot make major decisions without Goldberg's agreement.

Guardian Crossword No 21,208

Set by Janus



Across

- 1 Do they protect viewers from risque displays? (4,10)
- 9 Talk about exercise at work (7)
- 10 He is an expert on suet pie (7)
- 11 Little Miss Trent is said to be sound as a bell (5)
- 12 He tells dramatic tale of old people in train crash (8)
- 13 Make a mistake in battle for fruit (9)
- 14 Old vessel for drink (5)
- 15 Drink for learned divina in play (5)
- 17 It stimulates the heart in "Lear" and suchlike (9)
- 20 Force to study music (9)
- 22 Dress sometimes hard to get out of (5)
- 23 Vessel of use to smokers (7)

- 24 Gold coin bearing nothing but a flower? (7)
- 25 Where to see bad lapse by French husband on occasions (5,9)

Down

- 1 Lifting device used by football defenders (5,3,5)
- 2 Be more economical in vain (7)
- 3 Steady person around horses (6-3)
- 4 Oriental reader — one with voting rights (7)
- 5 Treatment of man in party organisation (7)
- 6 Reportedly thrown by social class (5)
- 7 Nothing in Latin to meet English high spirits (7)
- 8 Check flowers with fresh life forms (14)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,207

- 14 A far from godless person in the past? (9)
- 16 A golden sort of place (7)
- 17 A couple of beasts (14 or 16 for example) (7)
- 18 Bitterness expressed by private soldier (7)
- 19 Screw on ball used as bait (7)
- 21 Bird with the French appellation (5)

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Dismiss transistors and microchips as crude anachronisms and move into the weird world of the quantum computer — a machine with unlimited powers.

Michael Brooks on the next step

OnLine, page 12